

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**YOUTH IN THE PHILIPPINES:  
A Review of the Youth Situation and  
National Policies and Programmes**



**UNITED NATIONS**

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# Foreword

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) initiated a project entitled “Capacity-building in HRD policy-making for youth in Asia and the Pacific” in collaboration with Queen’s University, Canada, in August of 1999. The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of governments to formulate and implement, in coordination with the NGO and private sectors, national youth policies and programmes that address the human resources development (HRD) needs of young people in Asia and the Pacific.

In focusing on the needs of youth in the region, the project supports ESCAP’s belief that there are three key issues in providing a voice for youth in society: access and benefit, ability to influence and equity. These three issues are ultimately the pillars of youth participation – to ensure the rights of all youth to have access to opportunities and to play an active role in all spheres of society. This includes all youth, girls and boys, young men and women, rural and urban youth, youth with special needs and marginalized youth. The project recognizes the critical need for youth concerns and issues to be understood and addressed. The best way to do so is to give youth a voice through facilitation of their active participation.

The project included three components: (1) Advisory services to the governments of Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam in the establishment or strengthening of national youth coordinating mechanisms for youth policy formulation and implementation; (2) analysis of the youth situation, policies and programmes in the four participating countries, and drafting of policy alternatives; and (3) national youth policy dialogues among governments, NGOs and the private sector.

Research on the situation of youth and youth policy in each of the four countries was conducted by a National Counterpart Organization (NCO). These included the Malaysian Youth Council, Malaysia; the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Philippines; the National Youth Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister, Thailand; and the Viet Nam Youth Federation, Viet Nam. This research formed the basis of four country Monographs on the youth situation, policies and programmes as they relate to HRD issues of youth education and training, youth employment, youth health and youth rights and participation, including “Youth in the Philippines: A review of the youth situation, policies and programmes”.

A series of national policy dialogues was subsequently held in the four countries to discuss the findings of the research. Participants in the dialogues included senior officials from government and non-governmental agencies concerned with youth development. The results of these dialogues have been incorporated into the recommendations section of each of the Monographs.

The recommendations that have resulted from these studies will feed into the policy-making process of each of the participating countries. In the Philippines, the study forms part of the ongoing policy discussion process in the country. In Thailand and Viet Nam, the recommendations will input into the National Youth Policy of each country that is currently being drafted. In the case of Malaysia, the research will contribute to the Plan of Action arising from the National Youth Development Policy.

This Monograph was drafted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and finalized by ESCAP and Queen’s University in collaboration with DSWD. The process of finalization of the monograph was coordinated by Ms Sheila Sukonta Thomson during her assignment as Consultant with ESCAP.

As part of ESCAP’s efforts to promote youth participation, an attempt was made to involve youth and to seek their opinions throughout the research process. In some countries, youth were the principle players in the NCO research teams and they represented their constituents in the National Policy Dialogues. In other cases, youth were interviewed and their opinions appear in quote form in the Monograph. Canadian students from Queen’s University also participated in the research process. Each NCO hosted one Canadian student who carried out focus group discussions and interviews with youth of that country. Some of the results of these discussions appear in the Monographs.

The Monograph itself has six chapters: Youth Development; Youth Education; Youth Health; Youth Employment; Youth Participation; and Conclusions and Recommendations. The first chapter on Youth Development provides an overview of youth participation in national development followed by a review of the national youth policy and programmes. Each of the three chapters on education, health, and employment begin with an analysis of policy and programmes in the concerned area. This is followed by a quantitative and a qualitative analysis on youth issues in the relevant area.

The chapter on Youth Participation highlights the various youth organizations operating in the country followed by a section that presents youth issues through their own voice. The chapter also discusses youth participation in politics as well as the media. Each of the first five chapters ends with a section that discusses the challenges to youth policy in the relevant area. The final chapter of the Monograph presents conclusions as well as recommendations for further action that have resulted from the research as well as the national policy dialogues.

Bearing in mind the objective of the project to strengthen the capacity of governments, in coordination with other sectors, to formulate and implement programmes that address the human resources development needs of youth, it is hoped that this Monograph will encourage at the local, national, and regional levels the inclusion of young people in decision-making processes and project implementation.

I would like to express our gratitude to Queen's University, Canada, our partner in conceiving and carrying out the project on youth policy-making in Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. We are grateful to Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for their financial support, without which we would not have been able to carry out the project. In addition, we would like to thank the Conference Board of Canada, which as executing agency for the APEC Phase II Project, was the mechanism that allowed CIDA to provide the funds for this project.

**KIM HAK-SU**

*Executive Secretary*  
*ESCAP*

# Message from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Canada

I welcome the publication of this monograph on the Youth Situation, Policies and Programmes in the Philippines with great pleasure. This is one of several important outcomes of the Project on Capacity-building in National Youth Policy-Making in Asia and the Pacific.

Youth are key agents of socio-economic development and technological innovation in the Asia-Pacific region. Canada shares with the member countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) involved in the project, such as the Philippines, the view that the well being of our youth should have a very high priority on the national agenda. Youth policy is an important instrument for promoting greater participation of young people in determining the direction of development in their societies. Identification of the current situation and needs of the youth, and the existing policies and programmes that directly and indirectly affect them, is an essential prerequisite to effective formulation and implementation of policy in which youth can play a positive and active role.

I am proud of this major outcome of the collaborative effort of Queen's University and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It is an important contribution to the

University's goal of increased internationalization of its programmes and scholarship. Young Canadian interns and young people from the Asia-Pacific region have played an active role in the preparation of these monographs. My colleagues from Queen's University, who directed this project, along with their colleagues from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, have shown how a carefully planned and implemented project on a crucial area of concern both in the region and globally, can contribute to the shared objectives of Canada and the Asia-Pacific region, in ensuring a better, self-directed future for the young people of the world.

This monograph is, therefore, a prime example of successful and effective cooperation between a Canadian university committed to the goal of preparing leaders and citizens for a global society, a team of dedicated specialists from the United Nations responsible for promoting human resources development in the region, and host country institutions responsible for ensuring the active participation of youth in national development. I congratulate the Human Resources Development Section of ESCAP; my colleagues from Queen's University, Professor Jayant Lele, Professor Lorna Wright, and Professor Audrey Kobayashi; the young Canadian interns associated with the project; and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of the Philippines for this excellent accomplishment.

**WILLIAM C. LEGGETT**

*Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
Queen's University, Canada*

# Abbreviations

<b>AFP</b>	Armed Forces of the Philippines
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>ALS</b>	Alternative Learning System
<b>ARMM</b>	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
<b>BEE</b>	Bureau of Elementary Education
<b>BHS</b>	Barangay Health Station
<b>BNFE</b>	Bureau of Non-Formal Education
<b>BPES</b>	Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports
<b>BSE</b>	Bureau of Secondary Education
<b>CARAGA</b>	Cordillera Administrative Region
<b>CCET</b>	Center for Education Technology
<b>CCP</b>	Communist Party of the Philippines
<b>CEGP</b>	College Editors Guild of the Philippines
<b>CHE</b>	Commission on Higher Education
<b>CHR</b>	Commission for Human Rights
<b>CPR</b>	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
<b>CSR</b>	Cohort Survival Rate
<b>CWC</b>	Council of the Welfare of Children
<b>DA</b>	Department of Agriculture
<b>DDB</b>	Dangerous Drugs Board
<b>DECS</b>	Department of Education, Culture and Sports
<b>DENR</b>	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
<b>DFA</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs



# Abbreviations

<b>DILG</b>	Department of Interior and Local Government
<b>DND</b>	Department of National Defence
<b>DOH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DOJ</b>	Department of Justice
<b>DOLE</b>	Department of Labour and Employment
<b>DSWD</b>	Department of Social Welfare and Development
<b>DTI</b>	Department of Trade and Industry
<b>DTS</b>	Dual Training System
<b>EDCOM</b>	Congressional Commission on Education
<b>EDPITAF</b>	Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>ESCAP</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
<b>FLEMMS</b>	Functional Literacy and Exposure to Mass Media Survey
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GO</b>	Government Organizations
<b>HDN</b>	Human Development Report
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>ICDP</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>ILS</b>	Institute for Labour Studies
<b>IMCS</b>	Instructional Materials Council Secretariat
<b>IMR</b>	Infant Mortality Rate

# Abbreviations

<b>ISKOLAR</b>	The Integrated SK Organizational Leadership and Re-orientation Programme
<b>ISY</b>	In-School Youth
<b>KB</b>	Kabataang Barangay
<b>KM</b>	Kabataang Makabayan
<b>LFS</b>	League of Filipino Students
<b>LGC</b>	Local Government Code
<b>LGU</b>	Local Government Unit
<b>LHB</b>	Local Health Board
<b>LKP</b>	Lasak ng kabataang Pilipino
<b>MAS</b>	Primary Mean Achievement Score
<b>MASP</b>	Movement for the Advancement of Student Power
<b>MMR</b>	Maternal Mortality Rate
<b>MNLF</b>	Moro National Liberation Front
<b>MPBE</b>	Master Plan for Basic Education
<b>MPKP</b>	Malayang Pagkakaia ng kabataang Pilipino
<b>MTRRCB</b>	Movie, Television and Radio Regulatory and Control Board
<b>MTYDP</b>	Medium-Term Youth Development Plan
<b>MYSA</b>	Muslim Youth and Students Alliance
<b>NAPC</b>	National Anti-Poverty Commission
<b>NCEE</b>	National College Entrance Examination
<b>NCEFA</b>	National Committee on Education for All

# Abbreviations

<b>NCIP</b>	National Commission on Indigenous People
<b>NCO</b>	National Coordinating Organizations
<b>NCR</b>	National Capital Region
<b>NCWDP</b>	National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons
<b>NDHS</b>	National Demographic and Health Survey
<b>NDS</b>	National Demographic Survey
<b>NEAP</b>	National Educators' Academy of the Philippines
<b>NEAT</b>	National Elementary Achievement Test
<b>NEDA</b>	National Economic Development Agency
<b>NETRC</b>	National Education Testing and Research Centre
<b>NFEA&amp;E</b>	Non-Formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NHIP</b>	National Health Insurance Programme
<b>NMYC</b>	National Manpower and Youth Council
<b>NMYL</b>	National Movement of Young Legislators
<b>NSAT</b>	National Secondary Assessment Test
<b>NSO</b>	National Statistic Office
<b>NSTIC</b>	National Science Teaching Instrumentation Center
<b>NUS</b>	National Union of Students
<b>NYC</b>	National Youth Commission
<b>NYP</b>	National Youth Parliament
<b>OSY</b>	Out-of-School Youth

# Abbreviations

<b>PEPT</b>	Philippine Education Placement Test
<b>PIA</b>	Public Information Agency
<b>PIDS</b>	Philippine Institute of Development Studies
<b>PMTDP</b>	Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan
<b>PMTYDP</b>	Philippine Medium-Term Youth Development Plan
<b>PNAC</b>	Philippine National AIDS Council
<b>PNDP</b>	Philippine National Development Plan
<b>POPCOM</b>	Population Commission
<b>PPA</b>	Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All
<b>PPAN</b>	Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition
<b>PPMP</b>	Philippine Population Management Programme
<b>PSC</b>	Philippine Sports Commission
<b>RHM</b>	Rural Health Midwife
<b>RHU</b>	Rural Health Unit
<b>ROTC</b>	Reserve Officer Training Course
<b>SCMP</b>	Student Christian Movement of the Philippines
<b>SDK</b>	Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan
<b>SHNC</b>	School Health and Nutrition Center
<b>SK</b>	Sangguniang Kabataan
<b>SLF</b>	Student Leaders' Forum
<b>SRA</b>	Social Reform Agenda
<b>STD</b>	Sexually Transmitted Disease

# Abbreviations

<b>SWS</b>	Social Weather Station
<b>TESDA</b>	Technical Education Skills Development Authority
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UQPE</b>	Universal Quality Primary Education
<b>USD</b>	US Dollar
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

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## ESSENTIAL DATA FOR THE PHILIPPINES

<b>Location</b>	South-eastern Asia, archipelago between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, east of Viet Nam
<b>Coordinates</b>	13 00 N, 122 00 E
<b>Area</b>	Total 300,000 sq km; Land 298,170 sq km; Water 1,830 sq km with 7,107 islands, of which some 80 per cent are uninhabited
<b>Coastline</b>	36,289 km
<b>Terrain</b>	Mostly mountains with narrow to extensive coastal lowlands
<b>Land Use</b>	Arable land: 19%; permanent crops: 12%; permanent pastures: 4%; forests and woodland: 46%; other: 19% (1993 est.)
<b>Irrigated Land</b>	15,800 sq km (1993 est.)
<b>Population</b>	75,967,000 (2000 est.)
<b>Age Structure</b>	0 to 14 years 37%; 15 to 24 years 20%; 60 years and over 4%
<b>Religions</b>	Roman Catholic 83%, Protestant 9%, Muslim 5%, Buddhist and other 3%
<b>Languages</b>	Filipino (official, based on Tagalog), English (official). Around 55 different ethnographic groups with 171 languages and dialects.
<b>Government</b>	Republic
<b>Capital</b>	Manila
<b>Administration</b>	72 provinces and 61 chartered cities 15 administrative regions
<b>Executive Branch</b>	<i>Chief of state:</i> President Joseph Ejercito ESTRADA (since 30 June 1998) note – the president is both the chief of state and head of government <i>Cabinet:</i> Cabinet appointed by the president with the consent of the Commission of Appointments
<b>Legislative Branch</b>	Bicameral National Assembly consists of a 200-member Bicameral Congress consists of the Senate (24 seats – one-half elected every three years; members elected by popular vote to serve six-year terms) and the House of Representatives (221 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve three-year terms; note – an additional 50 members may be appointed by the president)

<b>Judicial branch</b>	Supreme Court, justices are appointed for four-year terms by the president on the recommendation of the Judicial and Bar Council
<b>Monetary Unit/ Conversion Rate</b>	Filipino Peso (P), 1 US\$ = 44.45 P (United Nations official conversion rate as at July 2000)
<b>National Capital Region</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manila</li> <li>2. Quezon City</li> <li>3. Caloocan City</li> <li>4. Pasay City</li> <li>5. Makati City</li> <li>6. Las Piñas City</li> <li>7. Mandaluyong City</li> <li>8. Marikina City</li> <li>9. Pasig City</li> <li>10. Paranaque</li> <li>11. Malabon</li> <li>12. Navotas</li> <li>13. San Juan</li> <li>14. Muntinlupa</li> <li>15. Pateros</li> <li>16. Taguig</li> <li>17. Valenzuela, Bulacan</li> <li>18. Rizal Province</li> </ol>
<b>Cordillera Administrative Region</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abra</li> <li>2. Benguet (Baguio City)</li> <li>3. Ifugao</li> <li>4. Kalinga</li> <li>5. Apayao</li> <li>6. Mountain Province</li> </ol>
<b>Region I</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ilocos Norte (Laoag City)</li> <li>2. Ilocos Sur</li> <li>3. La Union</li> <li>4. Pangasinan (Dagupan City and San Carlos City)</li> </ol>
<b>Region II</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batanes</li> <li>2. Cagayan</li> <li>3. Isabela</li> <li>4. Nueva Vizcaya</li> <li>5. Quirino</li> </ol>

<b>Region III</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bataan</li> <li>2. Bulacan</li> <li>3. Nueva Ecija</li> <li>4. Pampanga (Angeles City)</li> <li>5. Tarlac</li> <li>6. Zambales (Olongapo City)</li> </ol>
<b>Region IV</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aurora</li> <li>2. Batangas (Batangas City and Lipa City)</li> <li>3. Cavite (Tagaytay City, Cavite City and Trece Martires City)</li> <li>4. Laguna (San Pablo City)</li> <li>5. Marinduque</li> <li>6. Occidental Mindoro</li> <li>7. Oriental Mindoro</li> <li>8. Palawan (Puerto Princesa City)</li> <li>9. Quezon (Lucena City)</li> <li>10. Rizal</li> <li>11. Romblon</li> </ol>
<b>Region V</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Albay (Legaspi City)</li> <li>2. Camarines Norte</li> <li>3. Camarines Sur (Naga City and Iriga City)</li> <li>4. Catanduanes</li> <li>5. Masbate</li> <li>6. Sorsogon</li> </ol>
<b>Region VI</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aklan</li> <li>2. Antique</li> <li>3. Capiz (Roxas City)</li> <li>4. Guimaras</li> <li>5. Iloilo (Iloilo City)</li> <li>6. Negros Occidental (Bacolod City, San Carlos City, Cadiz City, Bago La Carlota City and Silay City)</li> </ol>
<b>Region VII</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bohol (Tagbilaran city)</li> <li>2. Cebu (Cebu City, Danao City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City and Toledo City)</li> <li>3. Negros Oriental (Bais City, Canlaon City and Dumaguete City)</li> <li>4. Siquijor</li> </ol>
<b>Region VIII</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biliran</li> <li>2. Leyte (Tacloban City and Ormoe City)</li> <li>3. Southern Leyte</li> <li>4. Eastern Samar</li> <li>5. Northern Samar</li> <li>6. Samar (Calbayog City)</li> </ol>

<b>Region IX</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basilan</li> <li>2. Zamboanga Del Norte</li> <li>3. Zamboanga Del Sur</li> </ol>
<b>Region X</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bukidnon (Malaybalay City)</li> <li>2. Camiguin</li> <li>3. Misamis Oriental (Cagayan de Oro City and Gingoog City)</li> <li>4. Misamis Occidental</li> </ol>
<b>Region XI</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Davao</li> <li>2. Davao Del Sul</li> <li>3. Davao Oriental</li> <li>4. South Cotabato</li> <li>5. Sarangani</li> </ol>
<b>Region XII</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lanao Del Norte</li> <li>2. Cotabato</li> <li>3. Sultan Kudarat</li> <li>4. Cotabato City</li> <li>5. Marawi City</li> </ol>
<b>Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lanao del Sur</li> <li>2. Maguindanao</li> <li>3. Sulu</li> <li>4. Tawi-Tawi</li> </ol>
<b>Caraga</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agusan del Norte (Butuan City)</li> <li>2. Agusan Del Sur</li> <li>3. Surigao Del Norte (Surigao City)</li> <li>4. Surigao del Sur</li> </ol>

# Youth Development I

## A. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background

In 1995, youth, defined as those who are 15 to 30 years old, comprised 30.1 per cent of the total population and nearly half of the country's labour force (NYC 1998). As such, they have played an important role in the development of the Philippines.

The economy of the Philippines showed only modest growth for the period between 1975 and 1995, with the average annual rate of GDP change during the 20-year period calculated at 0.6 per cent (UNDP 1999). The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, 1999 to 2004, acknowledges the 'boom-bust' nature of the development path experienced by the Philippines, highlighting the fact that the country is not yet resilient to domestic or external shocks. Low productivity in the agricultural sector, which accounted for 39.2 per cent of total employment in 1998, contributes to the development problems faced by the Philippines (NYC 1999a).

The Philippines has experienced considerable political turmoil over the past 30 years. After a period of martial law between 1972 and 1981 under President Marcos, the People's Power Movement led nationwide, anti-government protests, which eventually led to the election of Corazon Aquino in 1986. The two successive administrations of President Aquino (1986 to 1992) and President Ramos (1992 to 1998) focused their efforts on

re-establishing democratic institutions and bringing about economic reform. Aquino re-established the democratic institutions that led to the promulgation of the new 1987 Constitution.

The Ramos Administration introduced the Social Reform Agenda (SRA) in 1994, in an effort to minimize corruption and bring about improved economic and social services to the poor. The 1997 financial crisis affected the modest economic growth achievements of the Ramos Administration. Youth were hit particularly hard as a result of the crisis, due to their traditionally weak position in society.

The current Estrada Administration, elected on a platform of pro-poor strategies in June 1998, promised to continue economic reforms to help the Philippines match the pace of development in the newly industrialized countries of East Asia. Despite this promise, the administration faces increasing criticism for the alleged return to 'cronyism', which was a feature of the Marcos administration.

Filipino youth are vulnerable in the current economic and political environment of the Philippines. It is often difficult for youth to find employment owing to their lower qualifications and relatively short work experience. This situation leads to high youth unemployment in the Philippines. In 1997, a National Youth Commission (NYC) Survey found that unemployed and out-of-school youth comprised 40 per cent of the total youth population (NYC 1999a). Youth, as a sub-sector, are also easily affected by economic downturns. Despite improvements in social service delivery during the past decade and increased awareness among youth of health issues such as HIV/AIDS, Filipino youth continue to face many social problems. As a result, youth have the highest poverty incidence among the various sectors of society (NYC 1998).

There are, however, some indicators that provide hope for the youth of the Philippines. In June 1995, in recognition of the valuable role youth can play assisting the development of the Philippines, the government established the National Youth Commission (NYC 1998). The mandate of the NYC involves the empowerment of youth in all aspects of political, social and economic affairs.

A significant proportion of the national budget is currently allocated to social services such as education and health. Increased access to and participation in education, a reduction in the fertility rate and improved literacy rates offer further signs of hope for the youth of the Philippines.



## **2. Human resource development achievements**

The economy of the Philippines showed only modest growth for the period between 1975 and 1995. From 1975 to 1995, the GDP increased by a mere USD 85, from USD 568 to USD 653 respectively. In 1985, the GDP dropped to below the 1975 level at USD 562 when Marcos fled the country following the 'People Power' revolution. Between 1975 and 1995, the GDP growth represented an average annual rate of GDP increase of 0.6 per cent (UNDP 1999). Although growth does not equal development, economic growth is a necessary component of development.

There is an increasing commitment to social services in the Philippines, as is demonstrated by the increase in the proportion of the national budget allocated to social services. The social services budget allocation in 1994 represented 25 per cent of the total national budget, increasing to 27.9 per cent and 31 per cent in 1995 and 1996 respectively (NYC 1998). The impact of social development initiatives on the quality of life of Filipinos has, however, seen mixed results.

The health status of Filipinos has improved over time with an increase in life expectancy and declining infant mortality rates. Average life expectancy at birth between 1980 and 1995 increased considerably from 62 to 66 years. The infant mortality rate (IMR) also showed a reduction from 62 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1970 to an estimated 35.3 per 1,000 live births in 1995 (DOH 1999).

Significant developments have also been achieved in terms of access to contraception. Family planning users increased from 2.9 million in 1993 to 3.1 million in 1994, while the number of married women, aged 15 to 44 years, using family planning methods increased from 36.1 per cent in 1988 to 40 per cent in 1993. The number of currently married women between the ages of 15 to 44 years using contraception between 1990 and 1998 represented 40 per cent of the total (NYC 1998). The fertility rate in 2000 is 3.4 children per woman (ESCAP 2000).

Health services have expanded and sanitation and hygiene have improved over the past three decades, which explains the improvements in the health status of Filipinos. There has been a steady increase in access of the poor to social service infrastructure, which includes housing, electricity, sanitary toilets, and community water systems (NYC 1998). Between 1982 and 1996, the proportion of households with access to safe water supplies increased



from 80.1 to 86 per cent. Similarly, the proportion of households with access to sanitary toilets increased from 69.5 to 74.4 per during the same period (NYC 1999a).

Educational infrastructure has expanded throughout the country and reform of the national education system has been undertaken; however there is room for improvement in access to education, and in terms of the quality of education received by students in the Philippines.

In the area of participation and governance, participation at the local level and transparency are enshrined in the new Constitution promulgated in 1987. The new Constitution also promotes poverty reduction and social development in all phases of national development.

In summary, although the social development status of the country has improved, this improvement is still relatively slower than desired, particularly when compared with other countries in South East Asia including Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Continued efforts to stabilise the economy in order to decrease the impact of external shocks, such as the recent financial crisis, will assist in wealth creation and poverty reduction.

### **3. Disparities in equity and access**

Despite the overall improvements in human resources development in the Philippines, much is still desired in terms of equity. The distribution of the gains of economic development has been uneven.

In 1988, the proportion of Filipino households with incomes below the poverty threshold<sup>1</sup> was 40.2 per cent of the total number of households. This proportion went down to 32.1 per cent in 1997, but much of the improvement took place in the traditional centre of growth – the National Capital Region. While the incidence of poverty in the National Capital Region dropped rapidly from 21.6 per cent in 1988 to 7.1 per cent in 1997, in rural areas the drop in poverty incidence was from 46.3 per cent to 36.2 per cent during the same time period. Moreover, the income distribution deteriorated. The share in total household income of the poorest 30 per cent of the population, which was 9.3 per cent in 1988,

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<sup>1</sup> Defined in terms of the level of income required to meet a minimum level of household expenditures.



declined to 7.8 per cent in 1997. In contrast, the share in total household income of the richest 10 per cent of the population increased from 35.8 per cent in 1988 to 39.7 per cent in 1997 (PIDS 2000a).

Significant disparities exist between regions in the distribution of gross regional domestic product per capita and in the share of domestic share of production. The National Capital Region contributed 30.8 per cent towards the total domestic product, whereas the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao contributed less than 1 per cent (PIDS, 2000b). Large disparities between unemployment levels also exist between regions. For example, in 1998 while the national unemployment rate was estimated to be 9.6 per cent, the unemployment rate was as high as 15.1 per cent in the National Capital Region but only 4.1 per cent in Region II (PIDS 2000c).

Significant disparities in the health status of people also exist between urban, particularly the National Capital Region, and rural regions. For example, the national average infant mortality rate in 1998 was 36 deaths per 1,000 live births, but Region V had an average rate as low as 23.6 deaths per 1,000 live births while Region VI had an average as high as 60.8 deaths per 1,000 live births (PIDS 2000d). Similarly, the national average access to sanitary toilet facilities in 1997 was calculated as 76.3 per cent, but Region II had an average as high as 92.1 and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao had an average as low as 24.5 per cent (PIDS 2000e).

Human resources development for the people from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao is of particular concern. While an agreement was signed in September 1996 granting autonomy to 14 Moro National Liberation Front states, peace remains elusive in this area. Conflict impedes the development of this region, where the people currently suffer the lowest gross domestic product per capita and the highest average incidence of poverty in the country.

Data on earnings indicate that for the country as a whole, male workers continue to earn more on average than their female counterparts. In 1990, the average income of a male worker was nearly 2.2 times the earnings of a female worker. In urban areas, the earnings of a woman worker were lower than for men constituting about 53 per cent of the earnings of her male counterpart. In the rural areas, the situation was still worse, where average earnings of a female worker represented about one-third of the earnings of a rural male worker (ESCAP 1995).

In the last two decades, there has been a shift in the rural-urban composition of the population so that by 2000 the urban population represented 59 per cent of the total population, with an annual growth rate of 3.4 per cent (ESCAP 2000). This shift can be seen in the labour force, where the rural labour force accounted for only 51.6 per cent of the total labour force in 1994 (HDN/UNDP 1997).

In the Philippines' domestic economy, an uneven income distribution exists among different sectors. Workers are concentrated in the agricultural sector, which employs 52 per cent of all male workers and 30 per cent of all female workers (HDN/UNDP 1997); however, agriculture is the sector that contributes the least to production and income. In contrast, the shares of industry and services to output are much higher than their employment shares. The failure of industry, particularly manufacturing, to absorb more workers has resulted in criticisms of government industrial policies as biased against labour (ILS 1996).

International migration has also been a feature of the economy of the Philippines since an exodus to the Middle East began during the early 1970s. An overseas employment programme was institutionalized in 1974 through the Labour Code of the Philippines. This was aimed as a stop-gap measure to ease the lack of jobs in the Philippine domestic economy and to generate foreign exchange (ILS 1996). The number of Filipino foreign workers in 1995 was estimated at 4.2 million, according to official sources. Of these, 2.4 million were documented to be contract workers, while about 1.8 million were undocumented or illegal workers. The average yearly deployment was estimated at 650,000 Filipinos (ILS 1996). Filipino migration created more than seven million jobs between 1975 and 1995, many being created during a time when the domestic labour market was unable to provide jobs. In several years, more jobs were created for Filipinos abroad than domestically, and migrant remittances now constitute some four per cent of GNP (ILS 1996 and ESCAP 1995).

In summary, many challenges remain for youth policy makers and youth themselves. Large inequities between regions, genders and ethnic backgrounds and the lack of appropriate mechanisms, facilities and trained personnel needed to implement projects, have hampered the realization of policy goals of youth development in the Philippines at the local level.



## **B. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Background**

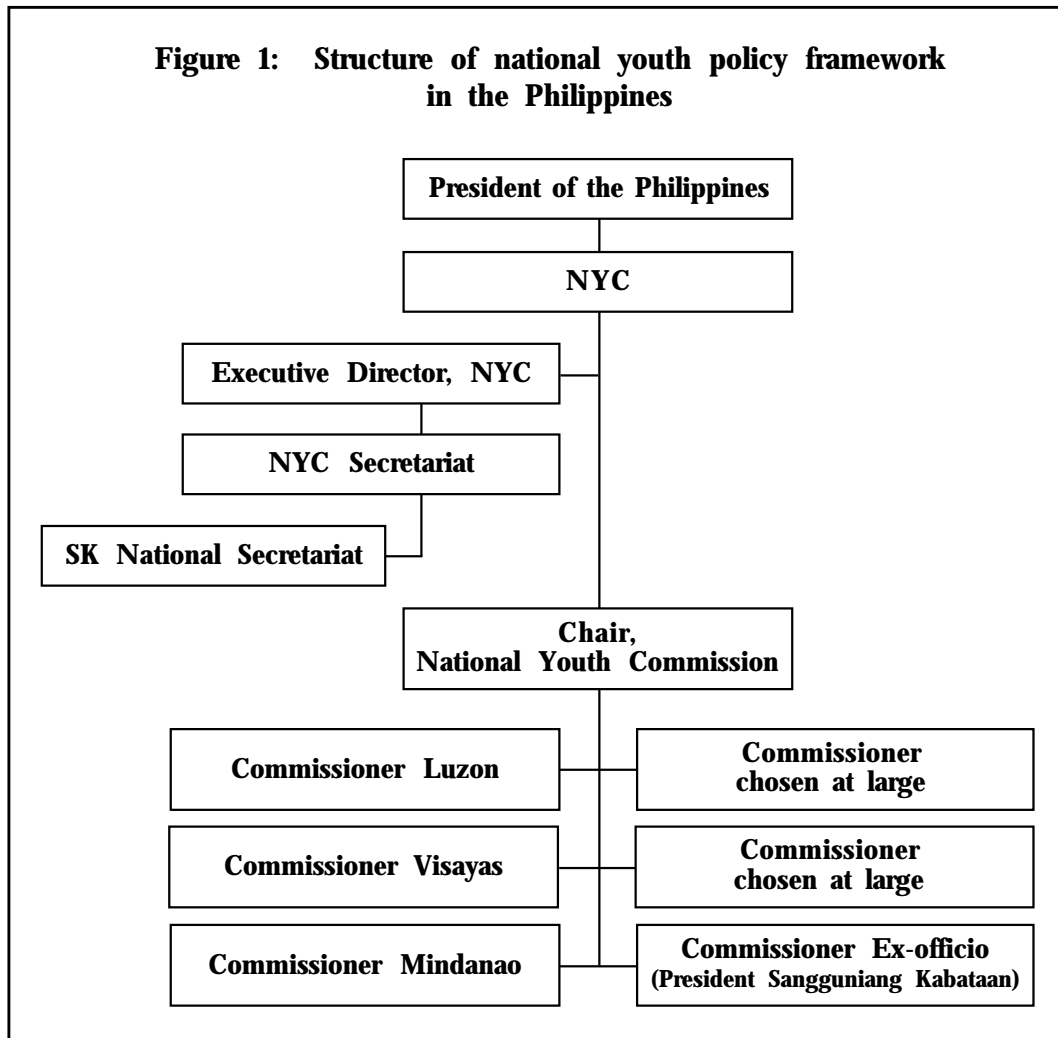
The environment for Filipino youth is defined by enabling laws, policies, plans, programmes and organizations that promote the development and welfare of youth, as well as their participation in development efforts. The number and diversity of enabling instruments developed in recent years points to a widening avenue for youth participation in development processes (NYC 1999b).

### **2. Responsible agencies**

The overall coordination for youth policy in the Philippines rests with the National Youth Commission (NYC). This coordination is done in conjunction with the various national coordinating organizations (NCO), ministries and NGOs that serve youth. The NYC is an Office of the President.

The Republic Act No. 8044, otherwise known as the Youth in Nation-Building Act, defines the structure of the NYC. It consists of a Chair, a Vice-chair, six Commissioners and one Ex-officio Commissioner. Section 7 of the Act states that the NYC should be chaired by a natural-born citizen of the Philippines who has occupied positions of responsibility and leadership in duly registered youth and youth-serving organizations or institutions. The person should be of good moral character and not have been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude. Representatives from Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao held three of the Commissioner positions in 2000, along with two Commissioners who were appointed by the President of the Philippines from a list of nominees submitted by youth and youth-serving organizations or institutions.

The President of the *Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)* National Federation, which is the organization for all elected SK federation presidents at the provincial, city and metropolitan political levels, serves in an ex-officio capacity (see Figure 1). The NYC acts as the Secretariat for the *Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)*.



Section 13 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines of 1987 states the following:

*The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.*

The approval in 1995 of Republic Act No. 8044, or the Youth in Nation-Building Act, hereafter the Act, paved the way for the creation of the NYC as the sole policy-making and coordinating body of all youth-related



institutions, programmes, projects and activities of the government. The Act defines youth as those 15 to 30 years old<sup>2</sup> (Section 2, Youth in Nation-Building Act 1994).

The Act charges the NYC with the functions of youth policy formulation; programme development and promotion; establishment of consultative mechanisms; research; and establishment of links with international youth-serving organizations. The NYC is also given the authority to seek or request assistance from governmental and non-governmental organizations or institutes in pursuance of its policies, programmes and projects (Section 10, Youth in Nation-Building Act 1994). It is acknowledged that the government has a “responsibility to enable youth to fulfill their vital role in nation-building” and in doing so “establishes the National Comprehensive and Coordinated Programme on Youth Development”.

Section 2 of the Act enshrines four principles for youth development:

- Promotion and protection of the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual and social well-being of youth to the end that youth realize their potential for improving the quality of life;
- Inculcation in youth of patriotism, nationalism and other basic desirable values to infuse in them faith in the Creator, belief in the sanctity of life and dignity of the human person, conviction for the strength and unity of the family and adherence to truth and justice;
- Encouragement of youth involvement in character-building and development activities for civic efficiency, stewardship of natural resources, agricultural and industrial productivity, and an understanding of world economic commitments on tariffs and trade and participation in structures for policy-making and programme implementation to reduce the incidence of poverty and accelerate socioeconomic development; and

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<sup>2</sup> The Youth in Nation-Building Act, 1994 defines youth for the purposes of the Act, however numerous other government service providers have different age ranges for youth. For example, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) defines youth as 7 to 18 years old, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) defines youth as 15 to 21 years old and the Department of Health (DOH) defines youth as 10 to 24 years old. The lack of a common definition presents some difficulties. This issue is discussed later in the monograph.

- Mobilization of youth's abilities, talents and skills and redirecting their creativity, inventive genius and wellspring of enthusiasm and hope for the freedom of our people from fear, hunger and injustice.

The NYC is also mandated with the responsibility of registering and helping in the establishment of youth and youth-serving organizations. Those organizations registered with the NYC shall be included in the NYC databank of youth organizations.

### **3. Youth development policies and plans**

#### ***(a) Medium-term youth development plan***

The Act established the "National Comprehensive and Coordinated Programme on Youth Development". The formulation of a Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP) by the NYC was a key component of that development programme. It is the government's blueprint in the area of youth protection, development and participation, and covers the period from 1999 until 2004 (NYC 1999b). After wide consultation, President Ramos approved the Plan during a cabinet meeting held on 17 March 1998. Executive Order No. 484 was signed to this effect adopting the MTYDP 1999 to 2004 and creating a monitoring committee to oversee its implementation (NYC 1999b).

The MTYDP presents the country's vision for the youth in the next medium-term plan. It is anchored on, and consistent with, the Philippine National Development Plan (PNDP) and the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 1999 to 2004. The plan is to be implemented under the direction of the President.

As the government's development plan for youth, the MTYDP seeks to assure the survival of those at risk, protect and develop those with potential and provide opportunities for all to participate in decision-making. The vision is for "a generation of more enlightened and empowered Filipino youth who are value-driven, active as well as innovative, with a strengthened belief in a Supreme-being and imbued with patriotism, yet open to global competition and cooperation" (NYC 1999b).

The other components of the development programme include a national study on the Situation of Youth in the Philippines; a national tri-annual review and evaluation of all organizations providing services to youth; and youth activities such as World Youth Day.



A committee was established to monitor the activities of the NYC and to oversee the implementation of the Medium Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP). The NYC Chair is also the Chair of the MTYDP Plan Monitoring Committee, with the Chair of the National Economic Development Agency (NEDA) serving as the Vice-chair of the MTYDP Monitoring Committee.

Also represented on the MTYDP Monitoring Committee are representatives of the following departments:

- Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS)
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)
- Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE)
- Department of National Defence (DND)
- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
- Public Information Agency (PIA)
- National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)
- National Council for the Welfare of Disabled People (NCWDP)
- National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC)
- League of Provinces of the Philippines, *Lisga ng mga Barangays* and the 4-H Club.

***(b) Youth policies***

Youth policy issues are divided into four sub-groups under the MTYDP. These groups are discussed below:

***(i) In-school youth (ISY)***

In order to further strengthen the state education policy, the government passed landmark laws and legislation to improve the quality of education and to ensure peoples' access to education. Notable policy developments include (NYC 1998):



- The provision of free secondary education with the enactment of Republic Act 6655;
- The creation of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) under Republic Act 7722 to oversee higher education, as well as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) under Republic Act 7796 to oversee technical and vocational education in the country. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) is now tasked with overseeing basic education;
- The adoption of the Dual Training System in accredited vocational and technical schools in the country;
- The administration of the National Secondary Aptitude Test with the abolition of the National College Entrance Examination;
- The lengthening of the school calendar from 185 to 200 days;
- The creation of a centre for excellence in teacher education; and
- The passage of the Science and Technology Act of 1994.

*(ii) Out-of-school youth*

Specific to out-of-school youth, the Constitution declares that the State shall encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, indigenous, and out-of-school youth study programmes, particularly those that respond to community needs. The Constitution further declares that the State shall provide out-of-school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency, and other skills.

As a result, significant laws, legislation, programmes, and projects were formulated and implemented to improve access to quality education and skills training for out-of-school youth. Significant policy developments in this area include (NYC 1999a):

- Passage of Republic Act 6655 also known as the “Free Secondary Education Act”;
- The enactment of Republic Act 7796 creating the Technical Education and Skills Authority (TESDA) to oversee technical and vocational education in the country; and



- The formulation of the Education for All Programme to promote continuing education for out-of-school youth, chiefly through non-formal and informal education.

*(iii) Working youth*

Laws have been enacted to promote the welfare, protection, and development of working youth. The primary legislation pertaining to youth is the Child and Youth Welfare Code (PD 603) that defines the extent to which the youth may be employed to perform work that should not be harmful to their safety, health, or normal development, as well as that which is not prejudicial to their studies (NYC 1999b).

There are numerous other general laws that impact upon working youth, such as those which seek to eliminate discrimination against women and young workers, those which uphold the principles of equal pay for work of equal value, and those that aim to protect the rights of overseas Filipinos (NYC 1999b).

Furthermore, in order to recognize working youths' contribution to the social and economic development of the country and to ensure that their welfare and interests are fully protected, Proclamation No. 1110 was issued, declaring February 15 of every year as "Working Youth Day".

*(iv) Youth with special needs*

The category of youth with special needs is further divided into 10 categories: youth in indigenous cultural communities; youth with disabilities; youth in situations of armed conflict; young victims of natural disasters and calamities; youth offenders; juvenile delinquents; drug-dependent youth; street youth; abused or exploited youth; and abandoned or neglected youth.

There are numerous policies and laws that impact upon youth with special needs. Most laws, however, are not youth-specific, and youth issues are instead covered under standard laws.

#### **4. Programmes for youth**

Numerous organizations implement programmes for youth development in the Philippines. These can be divided into categories depending upon the type of youth or youth-serving organization. There are two main groups: government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The government organizations can further be divided according to whether they are national or local level. While many of the organizations are cross-sectoral, others target specific sub-sectors. Further reference to some of these organisations are made in Chapter 5 on Youth Participation.

### **C. CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH POLICY**

The promulgation of the new Constitution in 1987, and the creation of the NYC in 1995 as an overarching agency to coordinate youth policy, represents significant achievements in the process of improving the situation of youth in the Philippines.

Nonetheless, there remain several challenges for youth policy makers in the country. Many of these have already been identified by the NYC during a two-year process of consultation (NYC 1999a).

As the NYC was only recently formed, it is still ill-equipped to coordinate and monitor the implementation of government, NGO and youth sector programmes at the regional and local levels. National coordination and improved linkages between the NYC and the SKs must be strengthened. Insufficient budgetary support for youth programmes and projects and low levels of youth participation in community and political activities have also been identified as issues presenting challenges for youth policy makers (NYC 1999a).

A shortfall in domestic job-generation, increasing urban migration and continuing vulnerability of the youth sector present challenges for policy makers in the area of employment. Falling standards of education, a prevailing concern for drug problems and the increased vulnerability of young women, also present challenges for policy makers in the area of social services (NYC 1999a).

Although improvements in the country's infrastructure base have occurred, they have put pressure on the environment, with the carrying capacity stressed to its limits. Youth will be the most severely affected by this continuing ecological stress. There is a need for policy makers to devise strategies that will increase youth participation in social, community, environmental and political activities (NYC 1999a).



Disparities in access to education, employment conditions, health and involvement in national political processes exist among different groups of Filipino youth. As a result, access and equity remain major concerns for policy makers in the areas of youth education, employment, health and public participation.

Having developed the MTYDP, the challenge remains for the Philippines to implement youth-related policies and programmes that will enable youth to become active partners in nation-building and to maximize their participation in the development process by improving their health, education and skills.

# Youth Education

## II

### A. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

#### 1. Background

The government of the Philippines has demonstrated its commitment to strengthening the education sector by enshrining it in the new Constitution. It has further demonstrated this commitment by increasing, or at least maintaining, budget allocations for education, often during trying economic times. The proportion of the national budget allocated to education rose from 13.6 per cent in 1995 to 21.3 per cent in 1998, with some fluctuations throughout the decade (see Table II.1).

**Table II.1: National education budget (P billion), 1990 to 1998**

<i>Item</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Total education budget	32.9	32.9	36.7	38.0	46.2	52.8	63.6	75.7	100.2
Total national budget						387.4	395.0	433.8	741.2
Education budget as % of total national budget	15.1	13.3	13.6	13.5	14.3	13.6	16.1	17.5	21.3

**Sources:** 1990-1994 data – World Bank estimates from World Bank (1996), 1995-1998 data – World Bank (1996), 1997-1999 data – World Bank (1997).

The long term education aims are to provide free primary and secondary education to all, eradicate illiteracy and develop vocational skills that meet the needs of the Philippine economy. The three agencies of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), the Commission for Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) share responsibility for policy making, planning, monitoring and evaluating education at their respective basic, tertiary and vocational levels. Basic education is predominantly provided by public institutions, whereas tertiary education is largely provided by private institutions.

While access remains an important educational issue, the quality of educational services and facilities is far from uniform in the Philippines, with severe access problems faced in many rural areas and low standards of education faced across the nation.

The government has made education a priority in the Philippines, particularly by aligning education policy with the national economic development plan. Nonetheless, the educational curricula require further strengthening, to improve the access to and quality of education, as well as to make education more relevant to industry needs.

## **2. Education reform**

Educational reforms currently underway in the Philippines have been influenced by many events. Several important ones are discussed below.

### **(a) *The Constitution of 1987***

The promulgation of the new Constitution of 1987 enshrined a high commitment to education by the government. The new Constitution was promulgated shortly after the Aquino government came to power, in the wake of the People Power led revolution that took place in 1986. Section 17 of Article II of the Constitution stipulates that:

*“the State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress and promote total human liberation and development.”*

Also, Section 1 of Article XIV states that:

*“the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.”*



Section 5 further stipulates that the State shall assign the highest budgetary priority to education and ensure that teaching will attract and retain the best available talents.

The Constitution reflects several major issues in education for youth in the Philippines. These include the provision of free public elementary and high school education, parental and community support, the quality of education, the role of private institutions in higher education, and the encouragement of non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems.

*(i) Access to education*

Free public elementary and high school education and compulsory elementary education for children of school age are enshrined in Section 2 of Article XIV of the Constitution. Section 5 stipulates the need for the State to take regional and sectoral needs and conditions into account when developing educational policies and programmes.

*(ii) Parental and community support*

A system of scholarship grants, student loan programmes, subsidies, and other incentives are prescribed in the Constitution under Section two of Article XIV. Section 4 of Article XIV prescribes tax exemptions for all grants, endowments, donations, or contributions used, actually, directly, and exclusively for educational purposes.

*(iii) Quality of education*

Section 5 of Article XIV of the Constitution stipulates that “teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment”.

*(iv) Role for private institutions*

Section 4 of Article XIV recognizes the complementary role of public and private institutions and charges the State with the duty of supervising the regulation of all education institutions.

*(v) Importance of non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems*

Encouragement of non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems and the provision of civic, vocational and other skills for adult citizens, the disabled and out-of-school youth are enshrined in Section 2 of Article XIV.

Many of the reforms to the education system in the Philippines have occurred since the new Constitution put in place mechanisms to address issues highlighted in the Constitution.

**(b) Free Secondary Education Act of 1988**

The provision of universal primary education was stipulated in the 1935 Constitution, and the 1973 Constitution broadened this to include, where finances permitted, free secondary education (NYC 1997a). However, free secondary education was not provided by the State until 1988 with the promulgation of the “Free Secondary Education” Act (Republic Act 6655), by the Philippine Congress. Unfortunately, the Act was not accompanied by continued budgetary support, so free secondary education eludes many Filipino youth, particularly those living in remote areas.

**(c) Presidential declaration of “Decade for Education for All” 1990-1999**

In 1989, the President proclaimed 1990-1999 as the “Decade of Education for All” (EFA). In 1991 the government released the Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All (PPA). Under the PPA, the EFA was operationalized with the goal of providing elementary education (Grades 1 to 6) to all Filipinos by the year 2000. The EFA project would be jointly implemented by the education and non-education sectors. Four major interventions were to be undertaken: institutionalisation of early childhood care and development; provision of universal, quality primary education; eradication of illiteracy; and continuing educational development for adults and out-of-school youth (OSY) (National Committee on EFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming). A review of the EFA decade is being undertaken in 2000 to measure actual results against the targets set a decade ago. Progress on EFA will be discussed in more detail in the sections that cover quantitative and qualitative education issues.

**(d) Congressional Commission of Education**

As a follow-up to the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) held in 1994, the Philippine Congress enacted legislation to overhaul the administration of education in the Philippines. It created the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) through the Higher Education Act (Republic Act 7722), charging CHED with the responsibility of overseeing higher education in the country. The Department of Education, Culture and Sport (DECS) was to focus on basic education. In addition, Republic Act 7796 established the Technical Education and Skills Development Agency (TESDA) to oversee technical and vocational education in the country.





In the findings of the EDCOM report, higher education was characterized by large enrolment, imbalanced distribution, under-investment and poor quality. There was also a mismatch between programmes and graduates; between employment and societal needs; as well as limited and under-developed graduate education.

The principles of the reform could reflect the decision to separate basic education from higher education so that public money could be concentrated on basic education while tertiary education be made more self-sustaining. The separation was aimed at addressing the need for increased enrolments in basic education, while simultaneously ensuring that tertiary education becomes more relevant to the needs of the industrial sector (NYC 1997a).

The Technical Education Skills Development Agency (TESDA) law prescribed that the State shall “provide relevant, accessible, high quality and efficient technical education and skills development in support of the development of high quality Filipino middle-level manpower responsive to, and in accordance with, Philippine development goals and priorities”. The TESDA law also aimed to strengthen private participation in higher education, “being direct participants and immediate beneficiaries of a trained and skilled workforce” (NYC 1997a).

***(e) Master Plan for Basic Education (MPBE), 1996-2005***

After the restructuring of the education sector in line with the recommendations of EDCOM, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) focussed on elementary and secondary education. Pursuant to this new mandate, DECS prepared the Master Plan for Basic Education: 1996 to 2005 (MPBE) to guide the future direction of this education sub-sector, with the EFA programme as its centre-piece (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines forthcoming).

***(f) Introduction of the dual training system***

The enactment of the Dual Training Act (Republic Act 7686), mandated the adoption of a dual training system for vocational and technical education. This law declared the adoption of the dual training system in duly accredited vocational and technical schools, in cooperation with accredited agricultural, industrial and business establishments as a “preferred means of producing a dependable pool of well-trained operators, craftsmen and technicians for the economy” (NYC 1997a).

***(g) Abolition of National College Entrance Examinations***

The enactment of Republic Act 7731 abolished the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in order to remove the barrier to poor students from remote *barangay* high schools seeking tertiary education. While the law removes an artificial barrier, enactment of a law alone cannot solve the complex issues associated with access and equity in education in the Philippines (NYC 1997a).

***(h) Medium-Term Youth Development Plan 1999-2004***

As outlined in Chapter I, the Youth in Nation-Building Act (Republic Act No. 8044 of 1995) established the National Youth Commission (NYC) and charged it with the functions of youth policy formulation, and programme development and promotion. Education policy forms a key element of the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan 1999-2004 (MTDYP), which is the major policy document and plan for youth in the medium-term.

The MTDYP addressed youth issues according to four sub-sectors: in-school youth; out-of-school youth; working youth; and youth with special needs. For in-school youth, the MTDYP notes the increasing school participation of students, the establishment of additional schools, improved resource allocation for the education sector, and the passage of landmark laws and legislation affecting in-school youth. Although achievements have been made, important policy issues, such as the lack of improvement in the performance indicators for secondary schools, the low success rate in professional examinations, a still inadequate number of secondary and tertiary schools, lingering social selectivity of tertiary institutions, and an increasing proportion of educated among the unemployed, have been identified as requiring attention. While in-school youth is the sub-sector with the most direct links to youth education policy, the MTDYP identified numerous education issues that also impact upon out-of-school youth, working youth and youth with special needs (NYC 1999b).

Other laws have been enacted which have affected education policy in the Philippines. These include Republic Act 7784 (Centre for Excellence in Teacher Education), aimed at strengthening the education and training of teachers nationwide through teacher education; Republic Act 7791, which lengthened the school year from 185 to 200 days;<sup>1</sup> and the

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<sup>1</sup> This was later increased to 220 days.



Science and Technology Act of 1994, which aims to promote the development of the country's science and technology human resources (NYC 1997a).

## **B. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

### **1. Formal education**

#### ***(a) Structure***

The formal educational system in the Philippines is made up of basic education and higher education sectors.

Basic education comprises the first ten years of education. Its two levels are: elementary (comprising Grades 1 to 6), and secondary (Grades 7 to 10). At present basic education is provided by 39,011 public and 35,617 private elementary schools nationwide. At the secondary level, there are 7,021 public and 4,209 private schools.

Higher education comprises college and university education. College courses run for a duration of two years. University courses, for those pursuing professional studies, run for four years. In 1998 to 1999 there were 1,465 universities, colleges and tertiary institutions in the Philippines, with 219 state universities and colleges, 102 Commission of Higher Education (CHED) supervised institutions, 1,118 private universities and colleges, 38 community colleges, 5 special schools and 13 government schools and institutions offering degree level courses. Fee-dependent private institutions predominate in higher education, accounting for some 80 per cent of the total number of higher education students (NYC 1998).

#### ***(b) Responsible government agencies***

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) is mandated to cover elementary, secondary and non-formal education. It is organized into two major structural components: the central office, which maintains the overall administration of basic education at the national level; and field offices, which are responsible for administration and coordination at the regional and local levels.

In addition, four staff bureaus assist in the formulation of policies, standards, and programmes related to curriculum and staff development. These are the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE), Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE), Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) and Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports (BPSS).

Eight further units are attached to the department, which similarly provide technical and administrative support. These are the Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF), the National Education Testing and Research Centre (NETRC), the School Health and Nutrition Center (SHNC), the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP), the National Science Teaching Instrumentation Center (NSTIC), the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), the Center for Education Technology (CCET), and the Centre for Students and Co-curricular Affairs.

The Commission for Higher Education (CHED) is responsible for higher education, established as an independent commission under the Office of the President. It covers both public and private higher education institutions as well as degree-granting programmes in all public and private post-secondary educational institutions.

## **2. Non-formal education**

### **(a) Structure**

Non-formal education has provided an important source of educational and training opportunities for out-of-school youth throughout the country. Technical and vocational schools in the Philippines train students in various fields.

### **(b) Responsible government agencies**

The Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) formulates policies, standards and programmes related to curriculum and staff development for non-formal education.

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) administers the post-secondary, middle level human resources training and development (technical and vocational training) at the tertiary level.<sup>2</sup> The mandate of TESDA is to develop curriculum and monitor institutional quality. TESDA has developed tests in many technical and vocational fields which lead to various industry credentials.

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<sup>2</sup> Whereas DECS is responsible for vocational education at the secondary level.



## C. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

### 1. Primary education

The Philippine Country Education for All (EFA) Assessment provided a comparison of the Philippine government universal quality primary education (UQPE) targets, set in 1990,<sup>3</sup> to recent achievements. Progress vis-à-vis the major indicators is shown below.

#### (a) Access to primary schools

It is estimated that one in four *barangays* has no elementary schools, depriving some 1.6 million children of basic education. A third of the country's *barangays* do not have complete elementary schools, with rural areas considerably worse off than urban areas (NYC 1998). Statistics such as these indicate that access is still a major problem for the primary school system in the Philippines.

#### (b) Primary net enrolment rate

Under the Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All (PPA) the primary net enrolment rate was to increase from 99.1 per cent in 1989 to 100 per cent in 2000. The MPBE reset the goal to 99 per cent in 2005. The original net enrolment rate was subsequently recalculated by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), which more accurately estimated the primary net enrolment rate in 1989 to be approximately 85 per cent. The net enrolment rate had increased to 95.73 per cent in 1998, which represents a sharp rise between 1989 and 1998 (National Committee on EFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

Therefore, while the Philippines has always had gross enrolment rates of higher than 100 per cent, the lower percentage of net enrolment rate is indicative of children not being in primary school. Much of the difference between gross enrolment rate and net enrolment rate is attributable to over-age children and repeaters (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

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<sup>3</sup> Two revisions occurred between 1990 and 1999, the first occurred as an off-shoot to the mid-decade EFA review in 1994 and the second was done for the benefit of the 1999 update of the PMTDP.

**(c) Primary cohort survival rate (CSR)**

Under the Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All (1996 to 2005) (PPA), the cohort survival rate was to increase from 68.7 per cent in 1989 to 80 per cent in 2000. The Master Plan for Basic Education (MPBE) reset the goal to 85 per cent in 2005. The effective new target for 2000 is therefore approximately 78 per cent from the MPBE trend line. Once again, in 1991 there was a recalculation of the primary cohort survival rate (CSR) with the actual CSR calculated as 62.7 per cent. Although there was an increase in the CSR between 1991 and 1996, this increase did not see the cohort survival rate rise adequately to meet the PPA target (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

In 1997, the average primary CSR for the Philippines was 68.6 per cent. However, there was a significant variation between regions, with the National Capital Region achieving the highest average at 84.7 per cent, and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao showing the lowest average of 31.3 per cent.

**(d) Primary dropout rate**

Under the PPA, the dropout rate was to decrease from 7.6 per cent in 1989 to 2 per cent in 2000. The dropout rate decreased slightly from 9.2 per cent in 1990 to 8.8 per cent in 1997, however the level still indicated a significant wastage in the system (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

Regional differences in dropout rates were apparent. A notable feature of regional dropout figures is that Region 1 consistently posted the lowest dropout rate, while the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) consistently had the highest rate. The drop-out rate of the ARMM fell from 24.3 per cent in 1991 to 18.6 per cent in 1997. All regions were consistently below targets (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

Therefore, despite the Philippines' achievements at the primary education level, considerable efforts are still required in order for the country to meet its goal of attaining universal basic education.

**2. Secondary education**

The introduction of the Free Secondary Education Act in 1988, the formulation of the Master Plan for Basic Education (MPBE) in 1995 and the issuance of the Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan (PMTDP)



all reaffirmed the commitment of the government to the provision of secondary education for all. Progress according to several indicators is outlined below.

**(a) Secondary enrolment rates**

Total secondary enrolment rates increased from 1.2 million in 1965-1966 to 4.9 million in 1996-1997 (NYC 1998). Students enrolled in secondary school represented some 22.5 per cent of the total youth population and 65.1 per cent of total secondary and tertiary enrolments in 1996-1997.

*(i) Secondary enrolment rates by sex*

The secondary level enrolment rate rose marginally by 0.9 per cent between 1997-1998 and 1998-1999. Public school enrolments increased, but private school enrolments decreased. This may have been due to the impact of the economic crisis whereby parents found it expensive to finance private schooling and transferred their children to public schools.

A 1998 National Youth Commission (NYC) report revealed that secondary enrolments were relatively equal by sex across all regions, with the largest differential in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) at 0.5 (NYC 1998). Similarly, ESCAP data for 2000 estimates the gross secondary enrolment ratio was 77 per cent for males and 78 per cent for females (ESCAP 2000, ESCAP Population Data Sheet).

*(ii) Secondary enrolment rates by area*

Secondary enrolment is heavily concentrated in three regions of the country: Region III, the National Capital Region and Region IV. These three regions accounted for 40 per cent of total secondary enrolment. The remaining 60 per cent was shared among thirteen regions, with the lower eight accounting for 20 per cent of the enrollees.

*(iii) Secondary enrolment rates by provider*

The number of secondary students enrolled in public institutions vis-à-vis private institutions increased from 37.7 per cent in 1965-1966 (0.5 million) to 70 per cent in 1996-1997 (3.4 million). The proportion of publicly-owned secondary schools is increasing, due to the enactment of the Free Secondary Education Act of 1988 (NYC 1998).

**(b) Secondary cohort survival rate**

The Grade 1 cohort survival rate at the secondary level fluctuated between 1994-1995 and 1998-1999. On average, for every ten children that enter Grade 1 in elementary school, almost five complete secondary schooling. The cohort survival rate rose in public schools, but fell slightly in private schools.

**(c) Drop-out, survival rates and completion rates**

In government secondary schools, while the participation rate appears to be increasing, the drop-out rate is also increasing (see Table II.2). Between 1988-1989 and 1994-1995, the dropout rate increased from 6 per cent to 9.2 per cent. In 1983-1984 the survival rate was 74.7 per cent, which became 73.3 per cent in 1995-1996, with episodes of improvement and deterioration in the interim. This rate indicates that roughly a quarter of first year high school students do not reach the fourth year level. The completion rate data show that many students entering high school still do not graduate. There is no similar data available for private secondary schools.

**Table II.2: Selected government secondary education performance indicators, 1983-1984 to 1995-1996 (per cent)**

<i>School year</i>	<i>Participation rate</i>	<i>Completion rate</i>	<i>Survival rate</i>	<i>Transition rate</i>	<i>Drop-out rate</i>	<i>Retention rate</i>
1983-1984	48.98	63.81	74.66	92.23	na	87.14
1984-1985	52.21	71.16	77.79	91.60	na	87.27
1985-1986	50.40	67.51	72.97	87.41	na	88.73
1986-1987	50.79	64.21	71.72	90.67	na	88.56
1987-1988	51.24	63.51	71.41	91.90	na	86.81
1988-1989	87.00	56.00	76.66	93.90	6.04	84.74
1989-1990	58.00	na	79.05	93.76	7.27	85.20
1990-1991	59.00	71.50	76.41	93.39	6.89	86.25
1991-1992	75.42	66.44	72.14	91.89	6.89	86.26
1992-1993	56.76	67.32	67.38	90.05	7.00	88.51
1993-1994	37.62	72.65	70.07	94.71	8.60	86.88
1994-1995	58.47	69.59	73.15	96.54	9.23	96.35
1995-1996	77.89	na	73.30	87.96	na	86.96

**Source:** Situation of the Youth in the Philippines 1998, 1998:34.





Research undertaken by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) found that the national average secondary cohort survival rate for 1997-1998 was calculated as 71.4 per cent. However, the variation between regions was great, with Region II recording the highest score at 79.8 per cent and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao having the lowest average at 59.3 per cent. This trend is consistent with the trend in primary cohort survival rate levels, indicating a system-wide disparity between regions, at all educational levels. Drop-out rates were not available by sex or by area.

*(i) Cause for dropping out*

Housekeeping, lack of personal interest, and the high cost of education were the top three reasons given by out-of-school youth (OSY) for not going to school (see Table II.3 below).

**Table II.3: Out-of-school youth 7 to 24 years old  
by reasons for not attending school**

<i>Reason for not attending school</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion (per cent)</i>
Total	3,838	100
High cost of education	718	18.7
Inaccessibility of school	142	3.7
Illness/disability	218	5.7
Household chores	995	25.9
Working/employment	515	13.4
Lack of personal interest	832	21.7
Cannot cope with school work	134	3.5
Other reasons	284	7.4

**Source:** 1994 FLEMMS, National Statistical Office (NSO) in NYC 1998.

*(d) Transition rates*

Between 1983-1984 and 1995-1996 the transition rate in selected government secondary schools fluctuated between the lowest rate of 87.4 per cent in 1985-1986 to a high of 96.5 per cent in 1994-1995 and fell once again to 88 per cent in 1995-1996 (see Table II.2). There are no figures on transition rates available for private secondary schools.

In summary, the indicators convey that while secondary school participation rates may be increasing among the school-age population, the outcome indicators of completion rates, survival rates, drop-out rates and retention rates are not showing substantial improvements (NYC 1998).

### **3. Higher education**

The Higher Education Act of 1994 declares that the State shall “protect, foster, and promote the right of all citizens to affordable quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to ensure that education shall be accessible to all” (NYC 1998). Several key indicators for higher education provision in the Philippines are discussed below.

#### **(a) *Enrolment rates***

Higher education in the Philippines is neither free nor compulsory. Enrolments are substantial, however, with a projected total of 2.6 million students enrolled in 1996-1997. Students enrolled in tertiary institutions represented some 12.07 per cent of the total projected youth population and 34.9 per cent of the total secondary and tertiary enrolments in 1996-1997 (NYC 1998). Enrolment rates by sex and by region are not available.

##### *(i) Enrolment rate by field of study*

In 1965-1966 teacher training and education, as well as business management, were the most popular topics of study among tertiary students. Teacher training began to lose its attractiveness during the 1970s, but business education continues to attract at least a quarter of tertiary students in the late 1990s. Engineering and medicine both attract more than ten per cent of tertiary students each year. This is despite the fact that maritime education<sup>4</sup> and information technology were placed in separate categories in the 1990s, whereas they are now combined. There is a need for providers of tertiary education to encourage students to choose fields where there are identified skill shortages, as employment creation is extremely low in the Philippines.

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<sup>4</sup> Filipino sea-based work accounted for as much as a quarter of Filipino overseas contract workers during the 1990s (NYC, 1998:33).



***(b) Barriers to accessing higher education***

Barriers to higher education can be measured by the number of institutions relative to students and the distribution of tertiary institutions across the country. Access may also be assessed according to the financial requirements. Although schools may be available, high tuition fees often prevent poor students from enrolling.

The concentration of tertiary institutions in certain regions presents barriers to access for many students who live in rural and remote regions. A large proportion of tertiary schools is located in the National Capital Region and adjacent Regions III and IV. In 1996-1997, tertiary institutions located in these regions accounted for more than 38 per cent of the total number of tertiary institutions.

The ownership of tertiary institutions can also present barriers to access and participation. In contrast to secondary schools, tertiary institutions remain largely private. The proportion of government tertiary institutions has never reached above 30 per cent. Vocational and technical schools appear to be following the same ownership and enrolment rate composition as tertiary institutions (NYC 1998). The high level of private ownership and enrolment rate in Philippine tertiary institutions results in adverse social selectivity, whereby only well-off and well-prepared students are accepted. The education system thus reinforces the prevailing social inequities (NYC 1998). The high fees often exclude children from poor families from participation, regardless of whether places are available.

In summary, the core challenge for tertiary education is to make it relevant to the needs of the national and international market, as well as making it accessible to qualified students.

**4. Non-formal education**

Many of the out-of-school youth have no plans to return to the formal education sector. It is therefore necessary to find alternative ways by which education can continue outside the formal system in the Philippines, particularly for those who have not completed basic education (NYC 1998).

The Constitution of 1987 states that the State shall encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, indigenous, and out-of-school youth study programmes, particularly those

that respond to community needs. The Constitution likewise declares that the State shall provide all citizens, including the disabled, and out-of-school youth, with training in civics, vocational efficiency and other skills (NYC 1998).

Proclamation Number 480 which declared 1990-1999 the Decade of Education for All (EFA), aimed for the universalization of primary education, eradication of illiteracy and continuing education for out-of-school youth and adults (NYC 1998). Non-formal education has a key role to play if EFA aims are to be met. The two main agencies responsible for non-formal education in the Philippines are discussed below.

**(a) Bureau for Non-formal Education (BNFE)**

The Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) is the main agency charged with the responsibility of providing non-formal education to youth and other sectors of Filipino society. Its functions include (NYC 1998):

- Serving as a means of meeting the learning needs of those unable to avail themselves of the educational services and programmes of formal education;
- Coordinating with various agencies in providing opportunities for the acquisition of skills necessary to enhance and ensure continuing employability; efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness in the labour market; and
- Serving as a means for expanding access to educational opportunities to citizens of various interest groups, demographic characteristics, and socio-economic status.

As part of the government's commitment to universal education for all, the Department of Education, Culture and Sport (DECS) has designed innovative programme strategies to enable youth who have dropped out of formal education to continue learning through various programmes of the BNFE. Upon enrolment in the non-formal education programme, youth aged 15 years and above, should take the Non-formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency (NFEA&E) Test. The test is designed to assess the level of literacy and non-formal achievement of the youth, and make a comparison to the formal education system.



After youth have completed the NFEA&E test, they are encouraged to enrol in the Alternative Learning System (ALS), which was designed with the objective of reaching out to those who have either been deprived of basic education, or those who choose not to acquire their basic learning needs from the conventional learning or school system. It aims to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life by raising the educational achievement of the poor, basic illiterates, and functional illiterates through the ALS. This programme serves as a transition or referral system from formal to non-formal education for the out-of-school youth. The five-year programme targets 300,000 out-of-school youth and adults, including disabled people and women, from 24 provinces in 9 regions, which were selected on the basis of a composite rating of lowest functional literacy rate and lowest elementary school participation rate.

Those out-of-school youth and adults interested in enrolling in secondary education are required to take the Philippine Education Placement Test (PEPT). The results of the test are used to determine academic-achievement levels of the youth. In 1998, the test was administered to 61,698 examinees nationally, while special examinations were administered to 7,545 out-of-school youth and adult in-school youth and clients of special programmes of government and non-government agencies.

***(b) Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA)***

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is the agency responsible for technical and vocational education. It offers human resources and vocational training courses through 15 regional human resources training centres focused on seven generic enrolment areas: general automatic; general building and construction; general electricity; general electronics; general machine shop; refrigeration and air conditioning; and welding and steel fabrication. Livelihood courses are offered at the provincial and satellite centres and community training units.

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) also implements and promotes the Dual Training System (DTS) and the Apprenticeship Programme and Leadership Programmes in skills development training (NYC 1998).

In summary, the system of non-formal education has been expanded as a result of the creation of the Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) and Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA). It is very

difficult, however, to measure the success of this expansion as there is no data available enabling the analysis of the number of people who undertook equivalency testing, enrolled in non-formal courses or graduated from courses by gender, region or course area. Furthermore, the apprenticeship courses are focused strongly in occupations that are traditionally male dominated. Similar vocational training in occupations that are traditionally undertaken by females does not currently exist.

There is a need to strengthen the skills training programmes and to ensure access to programmes so that important segments of the youth labour force, such as young women, indigenous youth, young farmers and other traditionally disadvantaged groups, are not excluded by the non-formal system of education (NYC 1998).

## **5. Military service**

The National Defence Act under the Republic of the Philippines Constitution provides that "military service shall be obligatory for all citizens of the Philippines". All Filipinos are liable to military service and it is a requirement that all citizens undergo national service and/or training. The obligation to undergo military training begins with the youth in school, commencing at the age of 10 years, and extends through the schooling period until the age of 21 years when one is subject to military service. In order to implement this requirement, the Department of Education includes civics and nationalism in the elementary curriculum.

The regular forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are composed purely of volunteers. They become the nucleus of the expanded forces when reservists are called to serve the Republic when the need arises. The reservists are taken from a pool of persons including trained or 21-year old draftees, those who have completed the Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC) in colleges and universities, and others who have undergone basic military training. ROTC is a pre-requisite to graduation for all able-bodied citizens who have not undertaken basic military training. This is provided for in Republic Act No. 7077, or the Citizens Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act. Under the expanded ROTC programme, ROTC training which lasts for four semesters has three categories: military, civic welfare and law enforcement. Draftee training lasts for six months and graduates of this training are given priority in the enlistment of volunteers into the regular military force.



## 6. Literacy

There is a growing appreciation in the Philippines that literacy, and in particular functional literacy, is a good indicator of overall social development. As a result, it has been adopted as a key social indicator in sub-sectoral planning documents. Youth literacy in relation to literacy amongst the general population is discussed below.

### *(a) Simple literacy rate*

Simple literacy is officially defined in the Functional Literacy and Exposure to Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS)<sup>5</sup> as the “ability of a person to read and write with understanding a simple message in any language or dialect”.

The literacy rate was high among Filipino youth aged 15 to 24 years at 96.6 per cent in 1990 and 97.3 per cent in 1994 compared to 93.6 per cent for the total population aged 15 years and above for both 1990 and 1994. Female youth aged 15 to 24 years were slightly more literate than male youth in both 1990 and 1994, but the opposite was the case for the total population aged 15 years and above (see Table II.4).

**Table II.4: Simple literacy rate by age group in 1990 and 1994**

<i>Age range</i>	<i>1990</i>			<i>1994</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Both sexes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Both sexes</i>
Youth (15 to 24 years)	96.3	96.9	96.6	96.6	98.1	97.3
Adult (15+ years)	94.0	93.2	93.6	93.7	93.5	93.6

**Source:** National Committee of EFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming.

As early as 1994, the Philippines had already posted a substantial achievement in pushing toward universal literacy in the 15 to 24 age bracket, but even the seemingly small percentage of illiterates translated into 390,000 persons at the time. Similarly, the absolute number of illiterates within the population of 15 years and above, stood at 2.7 million at the time (National Committee on EFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> So far, the Philippines has twice undertaken the FLEMMS. The first was conducted in 1989 while the second, which introduced some modifications in the survey instruments and timing, was conducted in 1994.

There was no appreciable variation in literacy rates among and within regions for either youth aged 15 to 24 years or the total population aged 15 years and above (National Committee on EFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

**(b) Functional literacy rate**

The official definition of terms of the 1994 FLEMMS describes functional literacy as the “ability to read and write with comprehension, as well as to make simple arithmetic calculations in an expanded sense. Furthermore, functional literacy “includes the possession of minimum skills needed to carry out simple functions in life and to interact with others in society” (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).<sup>6</sup>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), for its part, defines functional literacy as the “ability to read and write adequately enough to cope with the demands of daily living”. Functional literacy is normally attained following the completion of six years of formal education or the equivalent of recognized non-formal schooling (National Committee on EFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

Nationwide, the functional literacy rate for the total population rose from 73.2 per cent in 1989 to 83.8 per cent in 1994. The functional literacy rate among youth was 88.2 per cent in 1994. The high rates of functional literacy among youth can be attributed to increased elementary school completion rates. It was found that female youth were functionally more literate than male youth by an average of 5.3 per cent (NYC 1998).

The gap in functional literacy rates between regions was considerable with the highest functional literacy rates found in the National Capital Region (NCR) at 92.4 per cent and Region IV at 88.0 per cent. The lowest were found in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) at 61.2 per cent and Region XII at 77.4 per cent in 1994 (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

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<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, as stated in the explanatory notes of the survey questionnaires of the NSO on the 1994 FLEMMS, Functional Literacy (FL) is “a significantly higher level of literacy, which includes not only reading and writing skills but also numeracy skills. The skills must be sufficiently advanced to enable the individual to participate fully and efficiently in activities commonly occurring in his/her life situation that require a reasonable capability of communicating by written language”.





Greater efforts are still needed to improve the functional literacy among adults, for the benefit of both adults and youth. However, the task of making people literate in the Philippines is becoming progressively more difficult, as illiterates are either those who refuse to join literacy classes or those who are simply unreachable by virtue of geography.

## **D. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Student achievements**

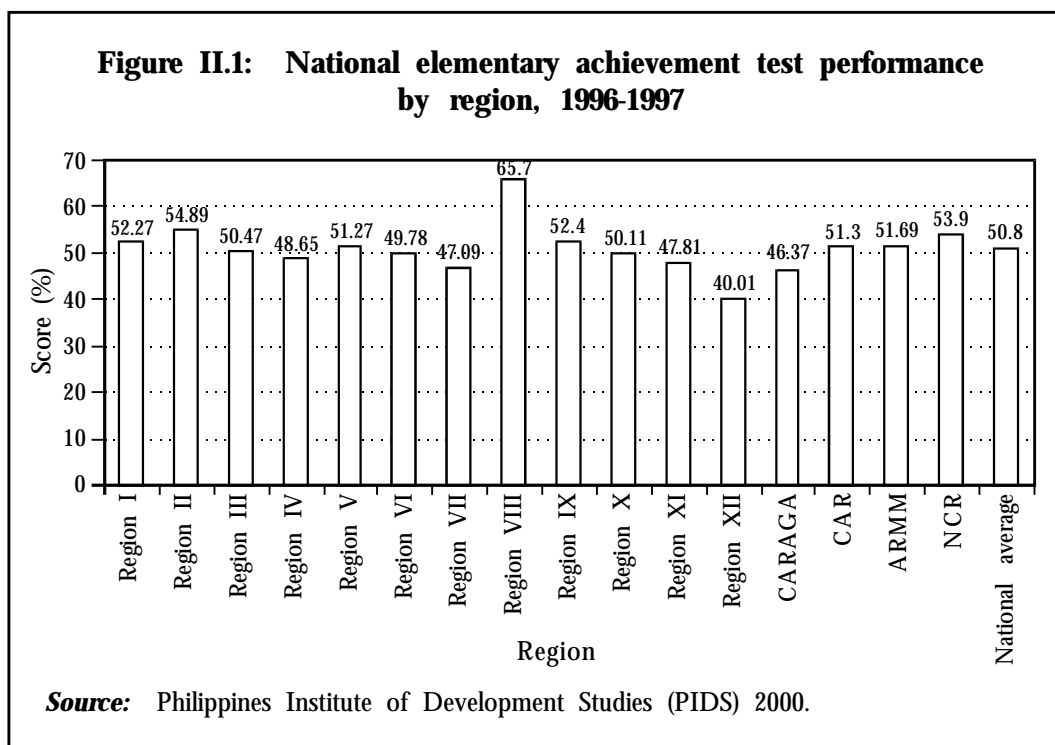
#### ***(a) Primary schools***

Under the Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All (PPA), the Primary Mean Achievement Score (MAS) was to rise from 55.2 per cent in 1989 to 75 per cent in 2000. The Master Plan for Basic Education (1996-2005) reset this goal to 73.6 per cent in 2005. The effective new target for 2000 was 65 per cent, estimated from the MBSE trend line (NCEFA and Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

Results from the National Elementary Achievement Test, first administered in 1993, reveal a steady improvement in test performance of primary students. In particular, the Mean Achievement Score rose from 41.8 per cent in 1992-1993 to 50.8 per cent in 1996-1997. However, progress still fell some 20 points below target. Given the slow improvement to date, it is unlikely that the new target of 73.6 per cent Mean Achievement Score, set in the Medium Plan for Basic Education, will be attained by 2000. Inequity among regions persists, with some regions performing extremely well in contrast to others (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

While the average National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) in 1996-1997 was 50.8 per cent, the highest average was found in Region VIII at 65.7 per cent, with the lowest score found in Region VII at 47.09 per cent (see Figure II.1).

The National Committee on EFA concluded that the slow increase in learning outcomes could be considered to be a natural consequence of focusing attention on the expansion of access and participation at the expense of educational outcomes (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).



The Philippine Country EFA Assessment found that a comparison of the state of Philippine primary education, before and after the nine years of implementing the EFA programme, shows essentially the same trend of high levels of participation and access, but low levels of internal efficiency and learning outcomes. It further states that “the education system is burdened with internal inefficiency that allows great numbers of pupils to repeat grades or drop out annually” and that “the likelihood of learning that will be ingrained will, on average, be only half of what should have been mastered” (NCEFA and the Republic of the Philippines, forthcoming).

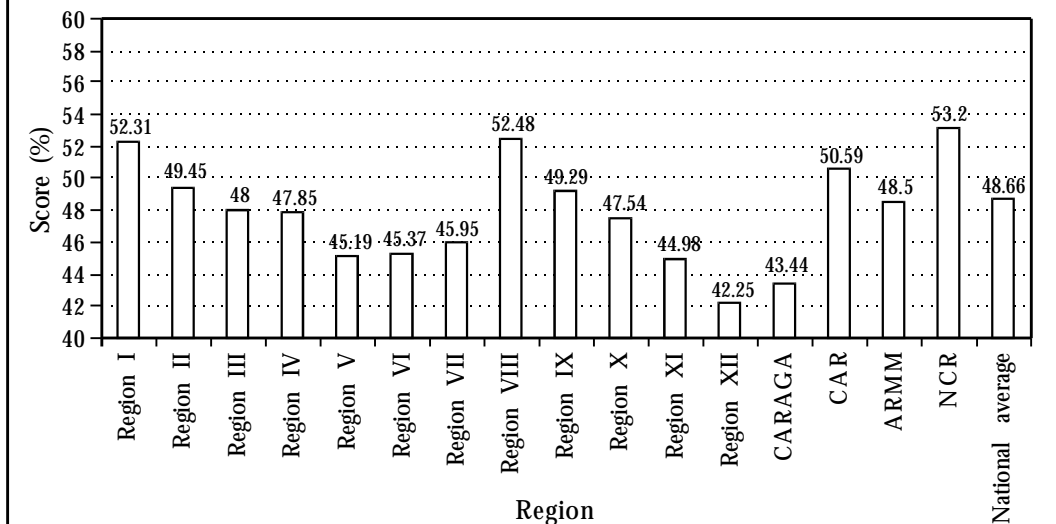
**(b) Secondary schools**

In the results of the National Secondary Assessment Test (NSAT), the mean score rose from 38.9 per cent in 1993-1994 to 48.7 per cent in 1996-1997; however, it dropped back to 46.1 per cent in 1998. Lower scores were notable in mathematics, science and English.

Whilst the average National Secondary Achievement Test performance in 1996-1997 was 48.7 per cent, the highest region was the National Capital Region (NCR) scoring 53.2 per cent, while the lowest was Region XII, scoring only 42.3 per cent (See Figure II.2 next page).



**Figure II.2: National secondary achievement test performance by region, 1996-1997**



**Source:** Philippines Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) 2000.

In summary, similar to the National Elementary Achievement Test performances in primary school, differences among average regional score results are significant. This suggests that the standard of education quality varies between regions, with the urban regions performing better than the rural ones.

**(c) Tertiary institutions**

One indicator that can be used to measure the quality of tertiary education is whether graduating students pass their professional examinations. In 1990, around 60 per cent of those students who graduated from college failed to get a professional license. This translates to a wastage of resources spent on education. Accountancy and law had the lowest success rates (less than 25 per cent), whereas the medical field had the highest rate (more than 70 per cent). Around one half of engineering students were not successful in obtaining a licence upon graduation (NYC 1998).

**(d) Non-formal education programmes**

Two indicators that can be used to measure the quality of non-formal education programmes are the number of graduates who gained employment at the end of their vocational training and the level of literacy in out-of-school youth.

In 1997, the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) noted the following results from the dual training system:

- A total of 23,278 apprentice and learner enrolments were registered.
- A total of 8,075 graduated from the above enrollees, which represented an increase of 32.5 per cent over the previous year when 6,095 graduated.
- A total of 2,547 were employed after training, representing a 52 per cent increase compared to the previous year when 1,675 were employed following training (NYC 1998: 37).

These statistics suggest that there is significant room for improvement in terms of increasing completion rates and improving the link between skills training and employment. Increased participation of the private sector in vocational skills training is identified in the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP) as one strategy required to improve the skills development-employment link.

Disaggregated data that would allow analysis of people who undertook equivalency testing, enrolled in non-formal courses or graduated from courses according to sex, region or course area are not available, but the apprenticeship courses focus strongly upon occupations which are traditionally male-dominated. As mentioned earlier in the monograph, there is also a need to improve the access and equity outcomes of traditionally disadvantaged groups, particularly women and rural agricultural workers.

Progress in literacy levels in the Philippines can reasonably be inferred as largely a result of the high participation rates in formal basic education. There have been gains made by both government and non-government organizations in providing basic learning needs. Of those illiterates who remain, a substantial number are those with very minimal schooling. This situation effectively contributes to the increasing literacy rates.

## **2. Education personnel**

The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines prescribes that the State shall “ensure that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfilment” (Section 5, Article XIV).



The number of teachers in secondary schools increased from 118,785 in 1990-1991 to 154,705 in 1996-1997 representing an increase of 30.2 per cent. Due to burgeoning enrolments, however, the student-teacher ratio in secondary schools has been relatively stable over the past 30 years. It was at 32 to 1 in 1996-1997, only a marginal decrease from 37 to 1 in 1965-1966 (NYC 1998).

Teachers employed in government schools represented 67.3 per cent of the total number of teachers employed in secondary schools. The high proportion of teachers employed in public secondary schools as compared to private schools is a trend evident since the beginning of the 1980s (NYC 1998).

In summary, the government of the Philippines has given priority to issues of school enrolment, while education quality has not received sufficient attention.

#### **E. CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

The challenges affecting the education sector in the Philippines are multifaceted, but relate primarily to equity and access, as well as quality and relevance.

Recognising that the Philippine Constitution mandates that the education sector should have the highest budgetary allocation, it is still beset with problems. Although education receives the highest allotment, as enrolments burgeon, the investment per student has declined in real terms.

The growth in the number of secondary schools lagged behind the growth in enrolments, presenting a major challenge since the introduction of the Free Secondary Education Act. The rapid population growth rate and the lowering of the school-age-admission will continue to place pressure on the government to speed up its efforts towards providing education to everyone.

Low achievements at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels indicate that attention needs to be directed towards educational quality. There is a continuing challenge to attract the best and brightest persons to the teaching profession. Attractive wages and career development opportunities are important to attract qualified staff. Innovations and curriculum review are also necessary to ensure that education meets the needs of the technology-driven, globalizing environment.



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AND NATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Based on the trends and indicators discussed above, the MTYDP identified five major challenges for education policy makers. These are the lack of improvement in the quality of education; the need to improve access to quality education for the poor; the recognition that there have been insufficient budget allocations for education; the need to increase internal efficiency of the education budget; and the lack of consistent data collection.

These five issues present major challenges to the education policy-makers in the Philippines. Progress in the areas identified above can have a great positive impact upon Filipino youth.

# Youth Health

# III

## **A. YOUTH HEALTH POLICY**

### **1. Background**

Over the past 20 years, the majority of the Filipino population has gained wider access to health care, nutrition and family planning services, and the health of Filipinos has improved. Vital indices of health and development such as the infant mortality rate (IMR), maternal mortality rate (MMR) and life expectancy have shown improvement (DOH 1999). Despite aggregate gains in health and nutrition, there are, however, continuing discrepancies within and between geographic regions in the Philippines. Large mortality differentials remain by province, with the five provinces registering the highest IMRs and MMRs being twice as high as those in the lowest five provinces (PIDS 1999). Furthermore, the Philippines has not seen the same level of improvement as many other South-East Asian countries (DOH 1999).

Many Filipinos have poor health because they have no means of paying for health care services, or such services remain inaccessible due to geographical factors (DOH 1999). In 1999, it was estimated that some 40 per cent of all Filipinos still die without seeing a doctor (DOH 1999). Recent health laws and policies have sought to improve service delivery and financing arrangements, with the ultimate goal of establishing a universally accessible health care system in the Philippines. The following sections will outline the national health policies, health care system and youth-specific health indicators for the Philippines.

## 2. National policies on health

The Philippines is a signatory to a number of international declarations relevant to youth health. These include the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care (1978) which formed the basis for the promotion and devolution towards a community-based approach to health services in the Philippines. As a signatory to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICDP) Programme for Action (Cairo, 1994), the Philippines signalled its commitment to strengthening reproductive health strategies, with youth identified as one special focus for action. The Lisbon Declaration of Youth Policies and Programmes, resulting from the World Youth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (1998), saw the Philippines commit to “ensuring that national youth policy formulation, implementation and follow-up processes are ... accorded the highest political levels”. This included the provision of adequate resources for health and drug substance abuse (paras 61-69 and 73-77). The Lisbon Declaration is arguably the most comprehensive commitment to date in terms of addressing the multiple needs of youth, including those relating to youth health.

National legislation or policies that have further contributed to the legal instruments that respond to health issues affecting youth include:

- Proclamation Number 603, the Child Youth and Welfare Code;
- The Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998, (Republic Act 8054) accompanied by early policy statements and guidelines in 1995, 1997 and 1998 relating to HIV/AIDS and STDs;
- The Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN);
- The Philippine Population Management Programme (PPMP) 1998-2003; and
- *Barangay* Health Workers’ Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7883) and Magna Carta for Health Workers( Republic Act 7305).

More recently, the Philippines formulated three policy documents that have particular importance to youth health: the Philippine Medium Term Development Plan (PMTDP); the National Plan for Health; and the National Health Objectives. These will each be discussed briefly in turn below.





***(a) Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan (PMTDP) 1999-2004***

The Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan (PMTDP) 1999-2004 contains sub-sectoral policies and strategies relating to health, nutrition and population. The PMTDP identifies the need to transform the health care delivery system into “one that is more dynamic, efficient, effective and responsive to devolution, by focussing public efforts on the prevention and control of leading communicable, non-communicable and lifestyle-related diseases, as well as conditions arising from environmental and occupational hazards” (PIDS 1999).

Central to the PMTDP is the strategy of devolution, which aims to shift the focus of the health care system away from the national level towards the district and provincial levels. Increasing public participation in health and nutrition activities is also enshrined in the plan, along with the need to improve health care financing through the National Health Insurance Programme. Continued emphasis upon population management, including improved access to, and quality of, reproductive health services, form part of the Plan (PIDS 1999).

Youth receive a brief specific mention in the PMTDP, which states that one aim is to ensure “that adolescents are provided with appropriate information, knowledge, education, and services on population and reproductive health” (PIDS 1999).

The National Health Policy flows out of the PMTDP 1999-2004. Although the majority of the strategies cover broad health needs, two strategies with particular relevance to youth are identified:

***(i) Reproductive health***

The policy recognizes the need to ensure “that adolescents are provided with appropriate information, knowledge, education and services on population and reproductive health”. The activities specified are to provide information to youth through multi-media campaigns, materials development and advocacy activities and support projects on adolescent health and youth development.

***(ii) Substance abuse***

The policy recognizes the need to attain “efficiency, effectiveness, simplicity and economy in the various efforts to combat substance abuse”. The activities specified include enhancement of the delivery of a multi-purpose drug abuse prevention and control programme.

The Philippine Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (PMTYDP) 1999-2004 prepared by the National Youth Commission (NYC) is also based on the PMTDP. Common issues of drug abuse, physical abuse and violence against young women were identified in this policy document.

**(b) National Health Plan 1995-2020**

The National Plan 1995-2020 and its companion document, the 10-year health plan, entitled "Investing In Equity in Health" are the two main national health care policies. The national strategies are:

- (i) the establishment of a referral system with NGOs and private practitioners services to youth;
- (ii) the mobilization of NGOs and the private sector to expand and incorporate adolescent-friendly health and psycho-social services into existing health programmes;
- (iii) the increase in accessibility of programmes utilizing schools, communities and church-based models;
- (iv) the creation of "one-stop-shops" for teenagers;
- (v) the design of programmes to address the psychological and social aspects of adolescent stress;
- (vi) the initiation of a national "Health Programme Hot Line"; and
- (vii) the recruitment and training of health workers to deal with adolescent clients.

**(c) The Adolescent and Youth Health Policy in the National Objectives For Health 1999-2004**

The National Objectives for Health 1999-2004 contain a national strategy for improving the health of the Filipinos. A life cycle approach is adopted in the policy document, with adolescent and youth health listed as a special target category under the national goal of promoting the health and nutrition of families. An essential health care package for Adolescents and Youth is proposed for development under the policy. A minimum package of services is recommended which would include (DOH 1999):

- Management of illness;
- Counselling on substance abuse, sexuality and reproductive tract infections;



- Nutrition and diet counseling;
- Mental health; and
- Family planning and responsible sexual behaviour.

The goal of promoting total health, well-being and self-esteem of young people is identified in the policy document along with the related health status objective of reduction in the mortality rate among adolescents and youth (see Table III.1).

**Table III.1: Youth health status objectives,  
Philippines National Objectives for Health, 1999-2004**

<i>Special target diseases</i>	<i>1994 baseline data (PHS) rate per 100,000 population</i>	<i>2004 targets</i>
Accidents and injuries	22.1	11.1
Pneumonia	5.6	2.8
Chronic RHD	4.2	2.1
Diarrhoea and other GIT diseases	3.2	1.6
Tuberculosis	3.2	1.6

**Source:** DOH 1999.

Four risk reduction objectives were identified as necessary in order to achieve the major health status objective (DOH 1999):

- Reduce the proportion of teenage girls (15 to 19 years old) who began child bearing from 7 per cent in 1998 to 3.5 per cent in 2004;
- Increase the health care-seeking behaviour of adolescents to 50 per cent (baseline data is to be established in 2000);
- Increase the knowledge and awareness level of adolescents on fertility, sexuality and sexual health to 80 per cent (baseline data is to be established in 2000); and
- Increase the knowledge and awareness level of adolescents on accident and injury prevention to 50 per cent (baseline data is to be established in 2000).

In order to achieve the risk reduction strategies, the following services and protection objectives were identified (DOH 1999):

- Increase the percentage of health facilities providing basic health services including counseling for adolescents and youth to 70 per cent (baseline data to be established in 2000);
- Establish specialized services, i.e., adolescent health centres for victims of occupational illnesses, rape and violence, substance abuse, in 50 per cent of Department of Health (DOH) hospitals (baseline data to be established in 2000);
- Integrate gender-sensitivity training and reproductive health in the secondary school curriculum (baseline data to be established in 2000);
- Establish resource centres of “one-stop-shops” for adolescents and youth in each province (baseline data to be established in 2000); and
- Ensure 50 per cent of adolescents and youth are provided with essential health care packages (baseline data to be established in 2000).

While the targets outlined in the National Health Objectives are ambitious, and while baseline figures in many instances have not yet been established, they do serve as the basis for a national adolescent and youth health policy.

## **B. NATIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

### **1. Structure**

The Philippines' health care system is still developing and provision varies greatly between regions. In 1999, the number of health facilities operating in the country totalled 12,913. There were 189 municipal hospitals, 277 district hospitals and 82 provincial hospitals. Rural Health Units (RHUs) existed at the municipal level, of which there were 1,946 in 1999. They were staffed by doctors, nurses, midwives, sanitary inspectors and other health workers. There were also 10,419 *Barangay* Health Stations (BHS) spread across the sixteen regions that are usually staffed by Rural Health Midwives (RHMs) with the assistance of *barangay* health volunteers (see Table III.2).

In 1998, there were 746 public and 1,087 private hospitals; private hospitals thus outnumbered public hospitals by a ratio of almost 1.5:1. The ratio varies from region to region. For example, there are more government



**Table III.2: Total number of health facilities by type and by region, 1999**

<i>Region</i>	<i>BHS</i>	<i>RHU/HC</i>	<i>Municipal hospital</i>	<i>District hospital</i>	<i>Provincial hospital</i>	<i>Total</i>
I	808	142	10	20	4	984
II	571	85	13	16	3	688
III	1,003	186	5	23	5	1,222
IV	1,202	198	37	25	9	1,471
V	693	85	11	23	4	816
VI	1,003	145	12	27	6	1,193
VII	788	99	25	22	3	937
VIII	644	151	11	25	6	837
IX	557	93	8	11	3	672
X	568	94	12	7	3	684
XI	763	79	12	11	3	868
XII	440	53	7	7	4	511
NCR	50	290	5	3	1	349
CAR	525	85	9	18	7	644
ARMM	356	84	7	12	17	476
CARAGA	448	77	5	27	4	561
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,419</b>	<b>1,946</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>12,913</b>

*Source:* Bureau of Licensing and Regulation, DOH, September 1999.

hospitals in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CARAGA) than private hospitals by a ratio of 6:1, but in the National Capital Region (NCR) there are more private hospitals than government hospitals with a ratio of 3:1. The Cordillera Administrative Region (CARAGA) and Region IV have the highest proportion of government hospitals, at 21.8 and 13.7 per cent respectively. Regions IV, XI and the National Capital Region (NCR) have the highest proportion of private hospitals with 16, 13.5 and 10.5 per cent respectively. The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has the lowest proportion of both public and private hospitals at 2.4 and 0.4 per cent respectively (see Table III.3).

In 1997, only 36 per cent of the total number of hospitals were public. These contributed 52 per cent of the total bed capacity. In the same year, each Rural Health Unit (RHU) served 29,746 people on average, while each *Barangay* Health Station (BHS) catered to 5,277 people (DOH 1999).

**Table III.3: Total number of hospitals by type and by region, 1998**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Government hospitals</i>				<i>Private hospitals</i>			
	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>Total</i>
I	10	9	7	<b>26</b>	49	15	7	<b>71</b>
II	18	18	2	<b>38</b>	29	13	1	<b>43</b>
III	5	16	7	<b>28</b>	40	48	14	<b>102</b>
IV	50	48	4	<b>102</b>	61	89	24	<b>174</b>
V	20	23	5	<b>48</b>	54	22	7	<b>83</b>
VI	18	33	3	<b>54</b>	11	8	9	<b>28</b>
VII	25	23	4	<b>52</b>	17	17	13	<b>47</b>
VIII	27	17	2	<b>46</b>	19	10	2	<b>31</b>
IX	21	6	2	<b>29</b>	31	16	3	<b>50</b>
X	12	6	4	<b>22</b>	51	13	7	<b>71</b>
XI	16	9	5	<b>30</b>	112	23	12	<b>147</b>
XII	9	7	2	<b>18</b>	51	19	6	<b>76</b>
NCR	5	14	24	<b>43</b>	29	46	39	<b>114</b>
CAR	17	11	1	<b>29</b>	12	5	1	<b>18</b>
ARMM	14	4		<b>18</b>	3	1		<b>4</b>
CARAGA	17	143	3	<b>163</b>	21	4	3	<b>28</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1,087</b>

*Source:* Bureau of Licensing and Regulation, DOH, September 1999.

## **2. Health care agencies**

### **(a) Public sector**

The Department of Health (DOH) is the principal health agency in the Philippines. It is responsible for ensuring that all Filipinos have access to basic public health services through the provision of quality health care and the regulation of providers of health goods and services.

The DOH is both a stakeholder in the health sector and a policy and regulatory body for health.

The DOH Office for Public Health Services provides public health policy advice to the Secretary of the DOH and supports the implementation of policy by developing health programme guidelines and health education services. Public health services include health programmes that promote health, thereby reducing preventable deaths and minimizing the risk of disease and other health hazards.



The DOH Office for Health Facilities and Regulation Services is responsible for hospital-based care. It is also responsible for enforcing health safety regulations and advising the DOH Secretary on operational policies for hospital operations and management.

Regional Health Offices are responsible for field operations of the DOH in their administrative regions and for providing catchment areas with efficient and effective medical services. The Regional Health Offices are tasked with implementing laws, regulations, policies and programmes. They are also mandated to coordinate with regional offices of other departments, offices and agencies, as well as with local governments.

As a result of this devolution to the regional level, health service delivery is in the process of being taken over by the local government units (LGUs). The *barangays* undertake health and social welfare services, through the maintenance of *barangay* health stations (BHS). They are also responsible for the maintenance of services and facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation, beautification and solid waste collection. National programmes such as those against malaria, tuberculosis and chronic disease are implemented by the DOH in coordination with the LGUs.

At the municipal level, in accordance with the standards and criteria of the DOH, Rural Health Units (RHUs) carry out health services through implementation of programmes and projects on primary health care, maternal and child care, and communicable and non-communicable disease control.

Referrals from *Barangay* Health Stations and RHUs are made to secondary and tertiary hospitals. Provincial governments manage provincial hospitals, while district and regional hospitals are managed by the DOH. Depending on the structure of the municipality, nutrition and family planning services are either attached to the Regional Health Unit, the social welfare or the population office. Both municipal and provincial governments undertake construction of health infrastructure, such as clinics, health centres, and water supply and drainage systems.

Although most are not operational, Local Health Boards (LHBs) were created at the municipal and provincial level with the aim of providing technical and advisory assistance in carrying out health services.

Hospitals that are retained by the government provide hospital-based care, and specialized or general services. Some conduct research on clinical priorities and some act as training hospitals for medical specialization.

Several other agencies are attached to the DOH. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation is charged with implementation of the National Health Insurance Law, and it administers the medicare programme for both the public and private sectors. The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) coordinates and manages the dangerous drugs control programme.

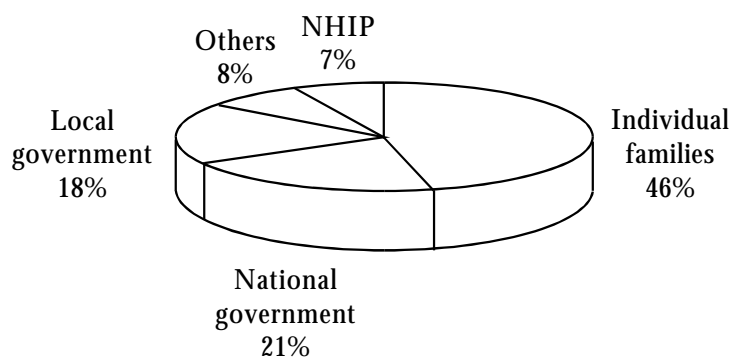
The Population Commission (POPCOM) is a lead agency in the implementation of the Philippine Population Management Programme (PPMP).

Other agencies assisting in health-related activities are the National Youth Council (NYC); the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS); the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); the Council of the Welfare of Children (CWC); the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA); the Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC); and the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP). (See Table I.1 for a list of health-related youth programmes).

**(b) Private sector**

The private sector's involvement in maintaining the Filipino peoples' health has been extensive. Their contribution has included the provision of health services in clinics and hospitals, health insurance, medicines, vaccines, medical supplies, equipment, and other health and nutrition products. It has also involved the manufacture of drugs, research and development, human resource development, and other health-related services (see Figure III.1).

**Figure III.1: Percentage distribution of sources of funds for health, the Philippines, 1997**



**Source:** DOH, 1999: 13.





### **3. Government expenditure**

In 1997 public health care accounted for only 13 per cent of the total government and private health expenditures (DOH 1999). For the same year, the total spent by the government and the private sector represented only 3.5 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP), or approximately P 8.4 billion. This is below the health spending prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for a developing country, which is at least five per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP).

In 1998, the health sub-sector received 9.5 per cent of the total government social services budget, or P 14,506 million. This represented a real decline of 15.4 per cent from the 1997 funding (PIDS 1999).

In response to the Asian financial crisis that began in 1997, the government directed all departments and agencies to reduce total expenditures by at least 25 per cent of authorized regular appropriations for non-personnel items. It also withheld ten per cent of the Internal Revenue Allotment to local government units. This decree had the potential to seriously affect health provision in the Philippines. However, reductions to the appropriations, totalling P 1.5 billion for critical basic health and social services programmes, were lifted in an effort to mitigate the adverse impact of the financial crisis on the disadvantaged sectors of society (Pineda 1998).

Public health services programmes and procurement of drugs were adversely affected by the budget reductions following the Asian financial crisis, with the area of health facilities maintenance and operations less affected than health services programmes and drug procurement. Among the public health services, some programmes received appropriations that were below 50 per cent of obligations, which had adverse implications for carrying out programme activities. For example, the STD/AIDS control programme received only 42 per cent of obligations and the cancer control programme received only 23 per cent of obligations. The smoking cessation programme, of particular relevance to youth, received relatively higher appropriations of 71 per cent of the obligation.

Declining trends in government budget allocation and actual expenditures and reduced per capita shares of health care, weaken programme implementation for emerging areas of concern for youth health, in particular STDs/HIV, smoking and early pregnancy among female youth.

In 1997, around 46 per cent of the total health spending was paid out-of-pocket by individual families, with only 39 per cent funded by the government. Of this, 21 per cent was funded by the national government and a further 18 per cent was provided by local governments. Private health insurance and community-based health financing schemes shared eight per cent of the total health spending, while the National Health Insurance Programme (NHIP) financed only seven per cent of the total health spending (DOH 1999) (see Figure III.1).

While the overall health spending increased in real and per capita terms between 1991 and 1997, the health sector is still not funded to the level necessary to see marked improvements in the health of the population. Further, the funds are often not allocated in the most effective manner. There is heavy spending on hospital or curative care and not enough for preventative health services. The large government hospitals in metropolitan Manila receive the largest share of the government's budget to the detriment of primary care services at the local level. The private sector is also bearing a high proportion of the overall cost, which disadvantages the poor who are unable to afford private health services (DOH 1999).

## **C. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Overview of youth health status and health related behaviour**

As adolescence is marked by rapid physical, physiological, emotional and social development, health is an important issue for Filipino youth. One important factor among youth that distinguishes them from adults is the initiation of risk-taking behaviour. Youth is often a time of experimentation that may place young people at risk of health-related problems.

Adolescents and youth often have an inadequate understanding of their own health needs, as well as about the consequences of risky behaviour. They also lack the knowledge about how to protect themselves, and are often unaware of how to access information on available health services. Health workers are rarely trained in understanding adolescent sexuality and most health services primarily target adults or children, often not meeting the special needs of youth in terms of confidentiality, privacy, cost and accessibility.



The following section discusses youth health indicators and related issues, providing an overview of the health status of Filipino youth.

## **2. Life expectancy**

The average life expectancy at birth rose from an average of 61.6 years in 1980 to 68.6 years in 1999. The life expectancy of females has always been higher than that of males in the Philippines. In 1999, the average life expectancy for females was 71.3 years, compared to 66 years for males (DOH 1999).

There are no available youth-specific data on life expectancy.

## **3. Mortality**

Accidents and other forms of violent death are the leading causes of death among the 10 to 19 year age group, with other leading causes including pneumonia, chronic rheumatic heart disease, diarrhoea and other gastrointestinal tract diseases and tuberculosis.

There is an appreciable difference between leading causes of mortality for youth and those for the general population. For the general population, there is a trend of increasing deaths due to non-communicable diseases, whereas the prevalence of accidents and injuries among youth stands out as significantly higher than the rate found in the general population (DOH 1999). These data highlight the need for youth-specific policies, programmes and strategies in response to the health issues that are more prevalent in the youth population than in the general population (see Table III.4).

## **4. Youth morbidity**

National health statistics reveal that 17 per cent of the total morbidity from notifiable diseases is from the 10 to 24 year age group. Deaths among this age group comprise 6.7 per cent of the total deaths (see leading causes of morbidity for total population in Table III.5 below).

In the general population, the prevalence of communicable diseases is still very high, while that of non-communicable diseases is on the rise. This situation places a double burden upon the nation.

**Table III.4: Ten leading causes of mortality among adolescents compared with total population, 1994**

<i>Diseases</i>	<i>Adolescent population, 10 to 19 years old</i>		<i>Diseases</i>	<i>Total population</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate (per 100,000 population)</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate (per 100,000 population)</i>
1. Accidents and injuries	3,361	22.14	1. Diseases of the heart	50,307	73.3
2. Pneumonia	848	5.58	2. Diseases of the vascular system	39,191	57.1
3. Chronic rheumatic heart disease	641	4.22	3. Pneumonias	28,132	41
4. Diarrhoea and other GIT diseases	480	3.16	4. Malignant neoplasm	28,110	41
5. Tuberculosis (all forms)	480	3.16	5. Tuberculosis (all forms)	27,292	39.8
6. Diseases of pulmonary circulation and other heart disease	422	2.77	6. Accidents and injuries	14,752	21.5
7. Meningitis	321	2.11	7. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and allied conditions	11,405	16.6
8. Leukaemia	316	2.08	8. Other respiratory diseases	8,382	12.2
9. Malnutrition	269	1.77	9. Diarrheal diseases	6,383	9.3
10. Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, nephrosis	252	1.65	10. Diabetes Mellitus	6,105	8.9

**Source:** For youth: DOH, 1999. For general population: DOH web site at <http://www.doh.gov.ph>



**Table III.5: Ten leading causes of morbidity**

<i>Diseases</i>	<i>Total population</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate (per 100,000 population)</i>
1. Diarrhoea	998,280	1,434.8
2. Pneumonia	677,230	974.4
3. Bronchitis	602,172	866.6
4. Influenza	560,172	805.1
5. T. B. Respiratory	152,466	219.1
6. Malaria	68,055	97.8
7. Diseases of the heart	61,310	88.1
8. Measles	35,389	50.9
9. Chicken pox	33,924	48.8
10. Dengue fever	15,571	22.4

**Source:** Total Population – DOH web site at <http://www.doh.gov.ph/gnhs.htm> (26 May 2000).

## **5. Reproductive health**

Studies on reproductive health concerns of Filipino adolescents and youth have been rare in the past, largely due to the sensitivity of the topic in the predominantly Catholic society. Unfortunately, this may mean that youth do not seek medical help, either because they are unaware of health issues, unaware of risks, or because of the stigma associated with visiting a clinic.

Data from the Department of Health showed that 10 per cent of first sexual experiences were forced. Thirty per cent of births to females in the reproductive ages; 30 per cent of marriages below 20 years of age; and 74 per cent of total estimated illegitimate births were experienced by women aged 15 to 24 years (DOH 1999). These statistics highlight the importance of reproductive health for Filipino youth.

### **(a) Contraception**

The National Health Objectives 1999-2004 policy document states that seven per cent of teenage girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years begin child bearing (DOH 1999). On average, Filipino women have given birth to

almost two children by their late twenties, almost four children by their late thirties, and almost five children by their late forties (see Table III.6). Between 1970 and 1995, fertility declined from an average of 6 children per female in 1970 to 3.7 in 1995-1997. The 1998 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), when surveying fertility preferences by age, found that the desire to delay childbearing is largely concentrated among women aged under 30 years (NSO & DOH 1998).

**Table III.6: Age-specific fertility rates, the Philippines, 1998**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Age specific fertility rate (per 1,000 women)</i>	<i>Mean number of children ever born</i>
15-19	46	0.07
20-24	177	0.68
25-29	210	1.75
30-34	156	2.86
35-39	111	3.75
40-44	40	4.16
45-49	7	4.74

**Source:** NSO and DOH, 1998.

In 1997, the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) among currently married women aged 15 to 49 years was 47 per cent. This figure was lower than the CPR of 48.1 per cent recorded in 1996. The drop is explained by a decline in the prevalence rate of traditional family planning methods, but a slight increase in the prevalence rate for modern contraceptive methods (NSO 1998).

Sexually active unmarried adolescents favour the less effective contraceptive methods such as condoms, the withdrawal method and the rhythm method. Some 62 per cent of those youth experiencing repeated sexual encounters with their first premarital sex partners used the withdrawal and rhythm methods of contraception. Married adolescents exhibit preference for more modern methods, such as the birth control pill. Higher exposure, higher education, urban residence, and being married are all factors associated with higher contraceptive use among adolescents.



The CPR among currently married women aged 15 to 19 years was 25.9 per cent, which was considerably lower than the average for the total population of currently married women, which was 47 per cent (see Table III.7). The CPR among currently married women aged 20 to 24 years was 39.2 and 47.9 per cent for currently married women aged between 25 to 29 years. The contraceptive choice differed by age group, with the birth control pill being the most common form of modern contraceptive method used by married women. The CPR across all age groups varied between regions. A low of 13 per cent was found in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), whereas a high of almost 60 per cent was found in both Northern Mindanao and South Mindanao (NSO 1998).

**Table III.7: Contraceptive methods used by currently married Filipino women by age group in per cent, 1997**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Any method</i>	<i>Any modern method</i>	<i>Birth control pill</i>	<i>Condom</i>
15-19	25.9	17.4	9.6	1.2
20-24	39.2	26.3	17.3	0.9
25-29	47.9	33.0	18.8	2.3
30-34	52.1	34.5	16.2	2.1
35-39	55.5	36.4	12.7	2.1
40-44	50.1	30.7	6.1	1.1
45-49	31.4	21.0	2.5	0.9

**Source:** 1997 Family Planning Survey, NSO 1998.

Generally, women with higher educational attainment were more likely to use a method of contraception than were those with lower educational attainment or no education at all. Women who had not received any education registered the lowest CPR (13.3 per cent), followed by women who had completed Grade I to V (36 per cent).

While no youth-specific disaggregated data are available, the CPR was higher in urban areas than in rural areas, at 50 per cent versus 44.1 per cent. This difference is mainly due to the higher prevalence of female sterilization, and birth control pill and condom use in urban areas compared to rural areas (NSO 1998).

Three out of four women obtained their contraceptive supplies from a public source, with the government hospital and rural health centre as the most important sources of contraception. As mentioned above, government agencies only see married patients, and as contraceptive supplies are predominantly obtained from government sources, this suggests that unmarried youth would find it extremely difficult to gain access to contraceptives or professional family planning advice.

**(b) Maternal mortality and abortion**

*(i) Maternal mortality*

Maternal mortality, which refers to the death of women during pregnancy, at childbirth, or in the period after childbirth, is an important indicator of the nation's health status. Based on the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), between 1970 and 1995, the country's health situation barely improved, unlike the situation in other South East Asian countries. The national MMR was 190 per 100,000 live births in 1970. It declined to 179.7 in 1995 (DOH 1999). Among Filipino women, the lifetime risk of dying from maternal causes is one in 100. While maternal deaths made up less than one per cent of the total deaths in the country, they were 14 per cent of all deaths of women aged 15 to 49 years. Most of the deaths could have been prevented through the provision of quality maternal care (DOH 1999).

Data from the Department of Health (DOH) showed that three out of four maternal deaths occurred among teenage mothers.

*(ii) Abortion*

The proportion of Filipino teenagers having induced abortions was 16.5 per cent, which was greater than those who had normal deliveries at 11.5 per cent and spontaneous abortions at 6.2 per cent (DOH 1999).

**6. Sexually transmitted diseases**

Unprotected sexual activity in adolescents and youth brings with it the dangers of too early or unwanted pregnancy, induced abortion often under hazardous conditions, STDs, and HIV infection and AIDS.

A survey conducted in 1994 found that a great number of those Filipino youth aged 15 to 24 years surveyed were actively engaged in sexual activity. About 1.8 million boys, or approximately 26 per cent of boys aged 14 to 24





years, and 670,000 girls, or 10 per cent of girls aged 15 to 24 years, had sexual relations. The average age for first sexual encounter was 18 (DOH 1999). Results of the 1993 National Demographic Survey (NDS) and Safe Motherhood Survey found that adolescents were among those with the highest unmet needs in terms of reproductive health care services.

Of the 660 individuals in the Philippines who reportedly tested positive for HIV, a total of 72, or 33 per cent, were within the age bracket of 15 to 24 years.

Unfortunately, however, the Philippines maintains a family planning programme that excludes adolescents and unmarried couples from the services. This is a major barrier and, as a result, there is a low level of health service utilization, despite a high prevalence of reproductive problems among the youth sub-sector of the population.

Youth are particularly vulnerable to STDs, with 24.4 per cent of female youth and 24.3 per cent of male youth surveyed in 1994 found to have at least one serious reproductive health problem (see Table III.8). Given the proportion of youth who are sexually active, they are particularly vulnerable to STDs and other reproductive health problems. Gonorrhoea is the most prevalent type of STD to affect the general population.

**Table III.8: Comparative reproductive health (RH) situation by sex and by type of youth**

<i>Reproductive health indicator</i>	<i>At least one serious RH problem (as %)</i>	<i>Vaginal/penile discharge (as %)</i>	<i>Painful urination (as %)</i>
<b>Female</b>			
In-school youth	15.0	3.1	12.1
Out-of-school youth	35.2	6.8	19.1
Working youth	26.0	4.5	17.9
Total female youth	24.4	4.7	15.9
<b>Male</b>			
In-school youth	24.1	1.5	21.3
Out-of-school youth	22.9	1.9	19.4
Working youth	25.3	4.5	22.4
Total male youth	24.3	4.7	21.4

**Source:** 1994 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Survey, PEARHPP Report.

Alarming, despite more than half of all adolescents reporting having a reproductive health problem, only 16 per cent sought medical attention. Among those with serious problems, 26 per cent sought health care, with women more likely to do so than men. Adolescents who were less educated were less likely to seek medical attention than those who were more educated.

**(a) HIV/AIDS**

From the time the first AIDS case was reported in the Philippines in 1984 until the end of 1998, a cumulative total of 1,168 HIV positive cases have been reported to the AIDS Registry, of which 362 had full-blown AIDS and 186 have died. Seventy-eight per cent of these cases has acquired the disease through sexual exposure. The hardest hit group among males has been the 30 to 39 year age group, whereas among females the highest has been the 19 to 29 age group. The disease is more prevalent among males than females at a ratio of 1.4:1 (DOH 1999).

Although the prevalence of HIV infection in the general population is less than 1 per cent, it was estimated that in 1999 there would be some 35,000 Filipinos infected with HIV. By the end of 2000, this number may increase to around 43,000. There have been around 100 new infections reported per year between 1991 and 1997, with the highest number of new cases reported in 1998.

The National Health Objectives policy document reports a baseline of only three hospitals in 1998 that have the capability of providing proper diagnosis, management, care of and support to people living with HIV/AIDS (DOH 1999). This indicates a major shortage of facilities where youth can undergo testing, and receive advice and counseling services.

**7. Substance abuse**

The mean age of a Filipino male substance user is 26 years, with the greatest percentage occurring in the age bracket of 20 to 24 years (21.8 per cent) and 25 to 29 years, (23.6 per cent). Among Filipino female youth, the largest number of drug users was in the age bracket of 15 to 19 years (NYC 1998) (see Table III.9).

The level of substance abuse by sex indicates that males are 12 times more likely to be drug users than are females. Workers and the self-employed represented 55 per cent of drug users, probably because they had the capacity to purchase substances, compared to the unemployed and those still studying (NYC 1998).



**Table III.9: Number of drug dependents by age and by sex, the Philippines, 1992-1996**

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
14 and below	Male	107	45	76	62	124
	Female	34	16	26	23	17
	Total	141	61	102	85	141
15 to 19	Male	470	477	497	549	750
	Female	119	70	90	98	74
	Total	589	547	587	647	824
20 to 24	Male	734	665	599	735	1070
	Female	70	50	38	42	71
	Total	804	715	637	777	1,141
25 to 29	Male	598	542	551	688	1008
	Female	49	43	41	47	71
	Total	647	585	592	735	1,079

**Source:** NYC 1998.

Some 77 per cent of substance users had at least high school or college education. Fifty-five point eight per cent of substance users were single, with a further 32 per cent married with families (NYC 1998).

Prevalence of tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption and drug abuse is discussed in the sections below.

**(a) Tobacco smoking**

A recent national study found that the age of experimentation with substance use was between 16 and 17 years. Among males, smoking was first tried at age 16.3 years, followed by drinking at 16.4 years, and drug use at 17 years. Among females, drugs were first tried at age 16.2, smoking at age 17 years, and drinking at age 17.5 years. Smoking prevalence among young males was 40.5 per cent, but only 4.2 per cent among young females (DOH 1999).

Another national survey conducted in 1998 found that 28 per cent of high school students smoked, with the average onset of smoking at 14 to 17 years of age (DOH 1999).

An older study, the 1989 National Smoking Prevalence Survey, conducted by the Lung Centre of the Philippines, had different results. It found that almost half (46 per cent) of all adults 18 years old and above were smokers. Smoking started at a mean age of 22 years in urban areas and 24 years in rural areas. The study found that 17 per cent of all youth aged 11 to 16 years were already smoking. It also found that 40 per cent of school boys and 19 per cent of school girls were smoking (DOH 1999). This survey took place over ten years ago. The common trend among all three surveys is the finding that a high proportion of male youth smoke, with the average age for commencement of smoking appearing to have decreased.

In the 1999-2004 National Objectives for Health, policy makers have set the following objectives for the reduction of tobacco smoking:

- from 15 to 5 per cent among children 6 to 11 years;
- from 29 to 20 per cent among those aged 12 to 19 years;
- from 46 to 40 per cent among those aged 20 and above (DOH 1999).

In order to achieve these objectives, the following services and strategies were identified (DOH 1999):

- impose a national prohibition of smoking in all public conveyances and in all enclosed public areas;
- impose a progressive ban on tobacco advertisement;
- impose a ban on the sale of cigarettes to minors;
- impose the labelling of health warnings on tobacco packs;
- impose additional taxes on the manufacture and sale of tobacco;
- provide alternative agricultural crops to tobacco growers;
- establish smoking cessation clinics in all DOH hospitals; and
- include anti-smoking educational programmes in elementary and high school curricula.

**(b) Alcohol consumption**

More than half of the youth surveyed in the national study mentioned above had tried drinking alcohol, and those still consuming alcohol stood at 37 per cent (DOH 1999).



In the National Health Objectives 1999-2004, it is recognized that young people can be particularly vulnerable to acute alcohol effects because of their lower tolerance to alcohol, their lack of experience with drinking, and their more hazardous patterns of drinking, including episodic drinking in high-risk situations (DOH 1999).

**(c) Drug abuse**

Statistics on the number of drug dependents from 1983 to 1992 indicate that drug use is most prevalent in the 15 to 24 year age group, with the bracket of 15 to 29 years accounting for 86 per cent of the total number of cases. Males consistently outnumbered females in terms of drug use, although drug use by females in the younger age bracket of 15 to 19 years began to rise in 1993.

The 1996 Social Weather Station (SWS) survey on youth estimated that 1.6 million Filipinos aged between 15 and 30 years had tried illegal drugs and 1.3 million claimed to have sold illegal drugs. The figure for illegal drug users increased to 2.1 million in 1997 (NYC 1998). Shabu and marijuana were the most used drugs across all age groups, with other commonly abused drugs being corex-D, robitussin-AC, rugby, trazepam and novaine (DOH 1999).

In 1996, a Dangerous Drug Board (DDB) report showed that of the 4,476 cases admitted to rehabilitation centres in the country, 68 per cent (3,044 cases) belonged to those in the age bracket 15 to 34 years (NYC 1998). In the DDB 1998 Annual Report, the number of clients evaluated by the Central Screening and Referral Unit had increased by 16 per cent over the previous year. There are no figures available on the number of youth clients as a proportion of total clients, although 48.3 per cent of all clients submitted for assessment were voluntarily submitted by their parents or relatives (DOH 1999).

While efforts have been made to respond to the substance abuse problem in the Philippines, much remains to be done, particularly with regard to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The National Objectives for Health policy document identifies the need for the establishment and operation of a Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre in each region. It also identifies the need for the establishment of a Substance Abuse Prevention Network in colleges and universities, where information on psychoactive substances could be made available (DOH 1999).

## 8. Violence and abuse against young women

Statistics on abuse and exploitation indicate that the number of reported cases among those aged 18 years and below has been steadily increasing since 1991. The instances of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation comprise the majority of reported cases (see Table III.10). An estimate in 1992 placed the number of sexually exploited children in the Philippines at 40,000, with most found in the major cities, particularly in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu (NYC 1998).

**Table III.10: Abuse among children and youth aged 18 and below, Philippines, 1991 to 1997**

<i>Type of abuse</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>
Physical abuse	265	346	–	164	658	775	888
Sexual abuse	163	310	587	1,237	1,976	2,133	2,231
Sexual exploitation	53	129	100	233	295	486	77
Trafficking	49	–	–	10	22	4	19
Emotional abuse	–	146	–	–	36	11	137
Abduction	–	19	–	–	–	–	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>1,644</b>	<b>2,987</b>	<b>3,409</b>	<b>3,363</b>

*Source:* NYC 1998.

Young Filipino women are more prone to physical and sexual abuse than are young men. A lack of education and skills, unemployment and underemployment often force young women into prostitution. The instances of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation comprise a majority of reported cases, with some 96 per cent of those sexually exploited children and youth being female (NYC 1998) (see Table III.11).

These statistics highlight the need for specialized health services for young females, as a particularly vulnerable group within the total Filipino youth population. They also highlight the need for education and awareness training among the community. The need for gender sensitivity training in school curricula has already been identified as one element of the Adolescent and Youth Health Policy.



**Table III.11: Distribution of sexually exploited children/youth by region and by sex, the Philippines, 1995**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
Region I	196	1	197
Region II	73	-	73
Region III	143	11	154
Region IV	251	63	314
Region V	90	-	90
Region VI	213	1	214
Region VII	197	3	200
Region VIII	169	-	169
Region IX	135	-	135
Region X	57	-	57
Region XI	68	1	69
Region XII	39	-	39
NCR	466	-	466
CAR	96	4	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,193</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>2,277</b>
<b>Proportion of total</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source:* NYC 1998.

## **D. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Health personnel**

The number of health personnel is large but unevenly distributed in the Philippines. Most health practitioners are located in metropolitan Manila and other urban centres. In 1997, there were 3,123 doctors, 1,782 dentists, 4,882 nurses and 15,647 midwives employed by Local Government Units (LGUs), while the Department of Health (DOH) had 4,232 doctors, 179 dentists, 4,837 nurses and 241 midwives employed nationally. The ratio of government health worker to the population was one doctor per 9,727 people, one dentist per 36,481, one nurse per 7,361 and one midwife per 4,503 (DOH 1999) (see Tables III.12 and III.13).

**Table III.12: Number of local government health personnel (devolved) by region, Philippines, 1997**

<i>Area</i>	<i>Doctors</i>	<i>Dentists</i>	<i>Nurses</i>	<i>Midwives</i>
Philippines	3,123	1,782	4,882	15,647
NCR	720	547	806	1,356
CAR	76	35	159	589
Region I	159	89	253	1,020
Region II	147	63	282	860
Region III	282	155	411	1,338
Region IV	503	252	766	2,207
Region V	152	76	270	1,008
Region VI	214	120	364	1,581
Region VII	249	107	439	1,389
Region VIII	130	88	205	8,29
Region IX	93	53	226	745
Region X	90	58	254	756
Region XI	67	28	92	344
Region XII	76	31	159	624
ARMM	89	28	149	402

*Source:* DOH 1999.

**Table III.13: Number of national government (DOH) health personnel (retained) by region, Philippines, 1997**

<i>Area</i>	<i>Doctors</i>	<i>Dentists</i>	<i>Nurses</i>	<i>Midwives</i>
Philippines	4,232	179	4,837	241
NCR	127	17	113	34
CAR	172	15	166	8
Region I	165	5	177	6
Region II	99	6	135	6
Region III	215	6	215	4
Region IV	274	9	207	3
Region V	124	5	158	4
Region VI	240	9	332	5
Region VII	281	8	368	2
Region VIII	161	4	166	1
Region IX	138	6	142	3
Region X	126	4	208	3
Region XI	253	6	223	4
Region XII	111	5	111	1
DOH Central Office	191	21	46	1
Specialty and Special Hospital	1,555	53	2,070	156

*Source:* DOH 1999.

\* ARMM and CARAGA are included in Regions IX, X, XI and XII.





## **2. Drug treatment centres**

In 1998, there were 40 active treatment and rehabilitation centres, 32 of which were residential and eight of which were outpatient treatment centres. The majority of these are located in or near the National Capital Region (NCR). Two are government-owned and the rest are either privately run or run by NGOs. There are very few centres catering specifically to youth (NYC 1998).

## **E. CHALLENGES FOR HEALTH POLICY**

A weak hospital system, insufficient mechanisms for providing public health programmes and uneven distribution of health personnel plague the Filipino health system. Many Filipinos have poor health because they have no means of paying for treatment, whereas for others, services remain inaccessible due to geographic isolation. These problems make the goal of achieving a universally accessible health care system extremely difficult.

In comparison to benchmarks for developing nations, the proportion of the national budget allocated to health is relatively low, with much of the funding allocated to large government hospitals located in metropolitan areas. As a result, many of the health services that were recently devolved to local regions suffer from problems such as a lack of sufficiently qualified health personnel.

Youth, health and education agencies have undertaken significant policy development work, although many of the actions and recommendations outlined in the policies that have been formulated have not yet been translated into practice. Several major issues have been identified as affecting provision of quality health services for Filipino youth. These include the lack of mechanisms for coordination and monitoring at regional and local levels, the lack of budgetary support for youth health programmes and projects, and the lack of mechanisms and strategies for creating financial support and coordination among various groups, such as GOs, NGOs and the private sector.

The health profiles of Filipino youth are quite different in nature to those of the general population. Reproductive health problems, substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and high levels of accidents and injuries are among the major problems identified as in need of preventative and promotive interventions for youth. This pattern reinforces the need for



youth-specific health policies, programmes and services. Despite the evidence presented in policy documents and recent research studies, most health services in the Philippines continue to target adults or children, often failing to meet the special needs of youth, especially in terms of confidentiality, privacy, accessibility and cost. Health workers are rarely trained in understanding youth issues and there are relatively few health services that cater specifically to youth.

Of particular concern are the issues of youth reproductive health and substance abuse among youth. Research consistently indicates that youth are among those with the highest unmet needs in terms of reproductive health services. Nonetheless, national policy maintains a family planning system that excludes adolescents and unmarried couples. Less reliable methods of contraception are being used by unmarried Filipino youth, which in turn, often leads to early and/or unwanted pregnancies, illegal abortions and the transmission of STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Similarly, research suggests that there is a rising incidence of smoking, drinking and drug abuse among youth; however very few treatment centres provide services which are sensitive to the issues associated with substance abuse among youth.

There is a need to undertake coordinated education and awareness campaigns, to provide youth-friendly, holistic health services and to develop mechanisms to improve the activities undertaken for youth by different government and private agencies in the Philippines. Incorporation of health education into school curricula has been identified as one activity to address youth health issues. There is also the need to establish an adequate system for collection and analysis of data relating to youth.

The National Objectives for Health by 2004 establish an overall objective of reducing the mortality rate among adolescents and youth by setting measurable targets for 2004. Much remains to be done to see the achievement of these targets, and ultimately to see the improvement in the health status of Filipino youth.

# Youth Employment IV

## **A. NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

### **1. Background**

The Constitution of 1987, the National Labour Code and other recent legislation provide a strong framework for the support and regulation of youth employment in the Philippines. A plethora of government departments at the national, provincial and local levels, is also involved in implementing labour market initiatives to increase skills development among Filipino youth. Despite these efforts, the Philippine Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (PMTYDP) 1999-2004 identifies for policy makers many challenges that remain in the area of youth employment.

The Philippine labour force suffers from an oversupply of labour. The economy is unable to absorb the large number of new entrants into the labour market each year. It is particularly difficult for young workers to find employment, and even more difficult for them to find well-paid, secure and safe jobs. This situation contributes to the internal and international migration of labour. Many migrants are young workers, who leave the Philippines in search of improved economic circumstances.

There is currently a mismatch between the skills that graduates from vocational and tertiary education are obtaining and those required by industry. There is also a favouring of training urban youth over their rural counterparts, and an imbalance between training for traditionally male-dominated occupational areas and traditionally female occupations. As a result, the Philippine education and training systems reinforce discrimination

existing in the broader society, with young women, indigenous youth and agricultural workers facing many barriers to employment and training opportunities.

Other issues such as low wages, unsafe working conditions, prevalence of child labour, low unionization and poor access of youth to social security protection make Filipino youth extremely vulnerable in both the domestic and international labour markets. Despite this, there are very few employment and training programmes that specifically target Filipino youth. The following section will provide an analysis of legislation, government initiatives and challenges in the area of youth employment in the Philippines.

## **2. Legislation, policies and plans relevant to youth employment**

### **(a) Constitution of 1987**

The Constitution of 1987 enshrines the promotion of full employment in Section 9 of Article II. Section 18 states that “the State affirms labour as a primary social economic force” and that it (the State) “shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare”. Section 3 of Article XIII, Social Justice and Human Rights, also stipulates that:

*The State shall afford full protection of labour, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all ..... They shall be entitled to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage.*

Section 8 of Article XIII also provides for incentives to promote employment creation for farmers, farm workers, and subsistence fishermen. As these categories of workers form a large proportion of the national labour force, and in particular, the youth labour force, this provision in the Constitution provides a basis for funding agricultural employment and training initiatives.

### **(b) Major labour legislation**

The basic state policy on labour is substantiated by the Labour Code of the Philippines, which states that “the State shall afford protection to labour, promote full employment, ensure equal work opportunities regardless of sex, race or creed, and regulate the relations between workers and employers”. It further states that “it (the State) shall assure the rights of workers to self-organization, collective bargaining, security of tenure, and just and humane working conditions”.



Apart from the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions that have been ratified by the Philippines, there are four main types of domestic legislation in place that have an impact upon youth employment. They relate to:

- the minimum working age;
- the protection of youth in the workplace;
- the terms and conditions of employment of youth;
- special rights and privileges for youth (see Table IV.10 for a list of relevant legislation, codes and conventions).

In terms of enforcing labour standards, efforts have been made to comply with all local and international commitments, particularly in relation to labour inspections. The government continues to review the applicability and sufficiency of its legislation.

While only 252 labour inspectors are available nationwide, additional personnel from the Labour Standards and Enforcement Division of regional Departments of Labour and Employment (DOLE) offices are trained to meet the increase in establishments that need to be inspected.

Child labour in the Philippines refers to work by individuals less than 15 years of age, who work for persons other than their parents or guardians, to the detriment of their normal development. It also encompasses work of minors between the ages of 15 and 17 years in hazardous ventures, where employees under the age of 18 years shall be registered and shall not perform night work and other specified tasks, for example, work with radiation, poisons, heavy machinery or in mines.

In 1993, Republic Act 7658 was enacted to amend Section 12, Article VII of the Republic Act 7610. This amendment still allows the employment of children under the age of 15 years; however it provides strict conditions under which children may be employed. Specifically, it limits hiring of children below 15 years of age to activities that are directly under the sole responsibility of their parents or legal guardians, and where other family members are employed; and to cinema, theatre, radio or television where their participation is essential. It also states that the work performed by children should neither endanger their lives, safety, health and morals, nor should it impair their normal development. It further obligates the parent or legal guardian to provide the children with the prescribed primary and secondary education (ILS 1996).

**(c) *Philippine Medium Term Youth Development Plan (PMTYDP), 1999-2004***

In the Philippines, the youth population is divided into four major sub-sectors: in-school youth, out-of-school youth, working youth and youth with special needs. Youth employment issues cut across all four sub-sectors; however, most employment policy initiatives are discussed under the working youth and the out-of-school youth policy chapters of the PMTYDP.

In the working youth chapter of the PMTYDP, the following employment-related strategies were identified for the medium term (NYC 1999):

- Simultaneous promotion of appropriate development policies and expansion of the demand for labour to absorb the unemployed youth;
- Strengthened skills training programmes and ensuring wider access by young workers;
- Strict enforcement of labour laws and standards;
- Promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of young women workers;
- Elimination of child labour;
- Promotion of the rights and welfare of youth workers who end up in contingent employment situations; and
- Reduction of migration pressures among the youth and protection of the rights of migrant workers.

In the out-of-school youth chapter of the PMTYDP, the following employment-related strategies were identified for the medium term (NYC 1999):

- Increasing the opportunities for skills training by:
  - Expanding the dual training system (DTS);
  - Developing training and capability-building schemes tailored specifically for women to encourage enrolment of female out-of-school youth; and
  - Providing training incentive packages to qualified out-of-school youth.
- Enhancing the capability of government training institutions and strengthening the participation of the private sector and local government units (LGUs) in technical and vocational education.



- Developing a labour market information system to serve as a guide for individual career decisions.
- Increasing livelihood opportunities by:
  - Ensuring the effective implementation of existing regional development plans to increase employment opportunities in rural areas;
  - Developing better agricultural training methods to make agriculture a more viable option to youth in rural areas;
  - Providing additional/alternative livelihood opportunities to the rural youth, particularly during off-farm periods; and
  - Rationalizing and expanding entrepreneurship development programmes to enable more out-of-school youth to become self-employed.

While the PMTYDP goes a long way towards identifying the problems that exist for youth in the area of employment, it fails to elucidate how these strategies will be funded or coordinated. The devolution of many social services to the local government level was identified as one major barrier to the successful implementation of youth employment programmes. Similarly, the lack of specific funding for youth employment programmes in government department budgets was also highlighted as a major difficulty. These two problems present major barriers for youth and youth policy makers.

### **3. Government budget allocation to employment**

Youth employment initiatives cut across many different government departments. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the total budget allocated to youth employment in the Philippines. The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) is the only national government agency with a specific budget for youth employment initiatives. Other agencies have no appropriation specific to the needs of youth, and must therefore finance programmes from their national budgets.

Of DOLE's total 1995 budget of P 730 million, P 138 million or 19 per cent was allocated to projects concerned with working youth such as the Special Programme for the Employment of Students (SPES) and Breaking Ground for Community Action on Child Labour Project. A further nine per cent or P 63.4 million was spent on the year-round youth programme and 27 per cent or P 199.7 million was allocated to enforcement of labour

laws, regulations and standards. In 1995 the working youth centre programmes allocated a project budget totalling P 20.3 million. Despite these allocations, the DOLE and other departments continue to face difficulties in implementing youth programmes and in effectively enforcing labour standards. Government programmes for young workers have to count on the “generosity” of other agencies in order for programmes to survive (NYC 1998).

#### **4. Government initiatives on youth employment**

##### ***(a) Responsible government agencies***

The main agencies involved in the provision of employment and training assistance for youth are outlined below.

##### ***(i) Department of Labour and Employment***

Based on the mandate of facilitating employment of workers through maintenance of industrial peace, enforcement of labour standards and promoting the welfare of workers, the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) is engaged in programmes that target youth by providing various capability and work-related training opportunities. Three sub-sectors are targeted: in-school youth (ISY), out-of-school youth (OSY) and the unemployed.

##### ***(ii) Department of Education, Culture and Sports***

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) is mainly concerned with providing educational opportunities to in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) to prepare them for formal or non-formal employment.

##### ***(iii) Technical Education Skills and Development Authority***

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) formulates policies to develop and implement skills development with active participation from industry groups, trade associations, employers and workers themselves.





Major TESDA programmes currently being accessed by youth include:

- Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) for workers to address skills and employment mismatches;
- Industry-focused skills testing and certification;
- Dual Training System (DTS) that is concerned with integrated in-school training and pilot training to enable trainees to develop skills and proficiency under actual work conditions; and
- Apprenticeship Programme whereby prospective trainees are enrolled by employers to undertake practical employment at the same time as gaining theoretical instruction.

*(iv) Department of Social Welfare and Development*

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) assists youth in skills development and by way of providing financial assistance. The Filipino government is committed to expanding opportunities and productivity for youth despite the fact that few agencies focus on youth employment. Lack of financial resources, however, has been the primary barrier effecting government efforts. While many industrial firms undertake their own skills development and vocational training programmes, and NGOs also conduct training programmes for youth, a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises depend on government agencies to provide and enhance the skills of their workforce.

Other agencies that provide employment and training assistance to youth include the Department of Agriculture (DOA), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA).

***(b) Capability-building programmes for youth***

There are currently five major capability-building programmes for youth:

*(i) Farm Youth Development Programme*

The Farm Youth Development Programme (FYDP) aims to develop young farm entrepreneurs by offering both training and livelihood support. It is undertaken by the DOA and the 4-H Club of the Philippines and involves

training on integrated farming, entrepreneurial and cooperative management skills training, as well as other activities including international exchange programmes and demonstration farms. The livelihood support is provided through the Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture and Fishery Council and is focussed on micro-enterprise and mini-enterprise projects with credit assistance.

Between 1989 and 1992, a total of 2,436 farm youth were trained and 156 micro-enterprises in 78 provinces were given financial support under this programme (NYC 1998).

*(ii) Working Youth Centre*

The Working Youth Centre (WYC) is run by the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE). The aim of the programme is to strengthen working youth organizations, to increase their level of awareness on issues and matters affecting workers and to develop their skills to equip them for employment.

Between the WYC's inception in 1985 and the first quarter of 1997, the 20 centres located in 9 regions in rural areas and less urbanized centres have served more than 41,325 young workers through livelihood projects, and facilitated the functioning of 1,551 youth organizations. Other figures indicate that apprenticeship and leadership projects trained 19,830 youth nationwide and placed 14,709 of the trainees in jobs. A further 323 livelihood programmes catered for 1,733 youth beneficiaries (NYC 1998).

*(iii) Young Filipino Entrepreneur*

The Young Filipino Entrepreneur (YFE) programme is carried out by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The programme funds enterprise training through industry immersion and on-the-job training in Taiwan. It also provides seed funding for trainees to start small enterprises on completion of training.

*(iv) Working Street Youth*

The Working Street Youth (WSY) programme is carried out by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). This programme aims to rescue working children from exploitative and hazardous occupations and to reintegrate them with their families and communities.



*(v) Kabataan 2000*

Through the Kabataan 2000 programme, in-school and out-of-school youth aged between 15 and 25 years can actively participate in productive and sustainable community development efforts. The provision of employment opportunities, enhancement of skills and capabilities in preparation for employment and economic empowerment form part of the basic strategies in the Kabataan 2000 programme.

One of the main components of Kabataan 2000 is the President's Youth Work Programme where numerous government agencies are involved in training and skills development initiatives. The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Public Information Agency (PIA), the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department for Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), and Department of Agriculture (DOA) are all involved in the President's Youth Work Programme. The beneficiaries of the President's Summer Youth Programme totalled 583,684 between 1995 and 1997, with more than half of those participating in the Special Programme for Employment of Students (SPES).

The Weekend Youth Brigade (WYB) is another Kabataan 2000 programme component, which involves the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (see Table I.1 for a list of youth programmes).

By 1998, the collection of summer youth programmes implemented by various national agencies had placed 992,717 youth in various summer programmes since launching the programme in 1994. Despite so many placements being made, a survey of youth undertaken in July 1996 found only 4 per cent of youth surveyed were aware of the summer job programmes (NYC 1998).

***(c) Technical education and skills training***

Apart from the capability-building programmes of the various government departments, the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) provides direct training services with youth as one of its target

groups. In 1994, TESDA provided human resources guidance services to 104,000 out-of-school youth and high school students. Many more were trained in livelihood skills (NYC 1998). Some of the training courses provide training in medium-level skills such as technicians and crafts-making, with a focus on developing trade skills. There were very few agricultural training programmes, despite the fact that a large number of unemployed youth originate from rural areas (see Table IV.1 below).

**Table IV.1: Graduates of TESDA human resources training programmes, 1993**

<i>Major course group</i>	<i>Number of graduates</i>
Training for government officials, special-interest organizations, corporate executives, managers and supervisors	1,729
Training for professionals	5,718
Training for technicians	748
Clerical training programmes	1,263
Service courses; shop and market salesmanship courses	11,697
Farming, forestry and fishing courses	1,557
Trade skills development	84,522
Operative skills	10,727
Unclassified courses	187
Not indicated	871
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,019</b>

**Source:** NYC 1998.

Despite the achievements of the above initiatives, skills development programmes for young workers and the out-of-school youth reach only a small proportion of youth. Industry still relies heavily on the government to enhance the skills and capabilities of workers, particularly among small and medium enterprises, farm enterprises and cottage industries. Many of the available skills development programmes are add-ons to existing youth development programmes, with no specific funding made available for youth employment programmes (NYC 1998).

Many of the government-run programmes are costly to run and they often turn out graduates for occupations for which there is insufficient labour market demand. This indicates a need for greater involvement of the private sector, particularly industry, to improve the match between the supply and demand of skills (NYC 1998).



Moreover, many of the training programmes do not focus on some of the most vulnerable youth sub-sectors such as young women, indigenous groups and young rural dwellers. As such, they only reach a minority of the youth labour force (NYC 1998).

In summary, while the Filipino government is committed to providing employment and training opportunities to youth, there remains a major lack of coordination between the various government agencies. There is a need for the focus of strategies to be more clearly defined and a further need for a more equitable distribution of resources.

***(d) Youth unemployment initiatives in response to the economic crisis***

The Philippine labour market suffered a slump in 1998 after the twin effects of El Nino and the financial crisis on the national economy. The agricultural, construction, manufacturing and financial sectors were the most adversely affected.

Although the labour force grew at 2.3 per cent in 1998 to reach 31.05 million, total employment registered a new zero growth rate of 0.7 per cent. The official unemployment rate reached a two-digit level of 10.1 per cent, whereas it had been declining in the previous years. Youth in the 15 to 24 year age group suffered greatly as a result of the struggling economy, with unemployment among this age group increasing to 21.2 per cent in 1998, up 3.1 per cent from 1997 figures.

Closure, retrenchment and lay-offs occurred mostly in the National Capital Region (NCR) that posted 58.7 per cent of all reported establishment closures and retrenchment in the country. Most of these establishments were engaged in manufacturing and wholesale and retail trade. Micro-establishments with less than 20 workers were most affected and one third of the displaced workers were those with either elementary level education or vocational graduates.

## **B. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Definitions**

The National Statistical Office (NSO) defines employed persons, unemployed persons, underemployed persons and seasonally active labour force as follows:

**(a) *Employed persons***

Employed persons are defined as persons aged 15 years old and over who fulfil one of the following conditions: they are people who have worked for at least one hour during the reference week; or they are with a job/business even though not at work because of temporary illness/injury, vacation or other leave of absence, bad weather, strike/labour disputes, or other reasons. Persons who are expected to report to work or to start operation of a farm or business enterprise within two weeks from the date of the survey are also considered employed.

**(b) *Unemployed persons***

Unemployed persons are defined as those persons in the labour force who have no job or business during the reference week but are actively looking for work. People who have ceased looking for work because they believe that no work is available or because of temporary illness/disability, bad weather, or pending job application or job interview, are also considered unemployed.

**(c) *Underemployed***

Employed persons who desire additional hours of work in their present jobs or in an additional job, or those who desire a new job with longer working hours are considered underemployed. In the National Youth Commission (NYC) report, Situation of Youth in the Philippines, 1998, underemployment is defined as less than 40 hours of work a week (NYC 1998).

**2. Labour force participation**

The National Labour Code defines the legal minimum working age as 15 years, and in 2000, the total labour force in the Philippines was estimated at 31.85 million people. From this total labour force, some 3 million were in the age range of 15 to 19 years, 4.1 million were in the age range of 20 to 24 years and a further 7.5 million were in the age range of 25 to 34 years.

In 1996, about 12 million youth were either employed or actively seeking employment, representing 60 per cent of the age-eligible youth population with an average labour force participation rate of 59.3 per cent for youth between 15 and 30 years (NYC 1998).



**Table IV.2: Labour force participation rate  
by sex and age group, 1996**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Labour force participation rate (per cent)</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Both sexes</i>
15-20	51.5	32.8	42.7
21-25	88.7	52.9	71.4
26-30	97.7	50.6	73.9

**Source:** National Statistical Office in NYC 1998.

The lowest participation rate is in the 15 to 20 year age group, as many of these youth are in school. Those youth in the age group 21 to 25 years had a labour force participation rate close to the national average, which was 66 per cent in 1995, while those in the age group 26 to 30 had a higher labour force participation rate, at 73.9 per cent (NYC 1998) (see Table IV.2 above).

**(a) Labour force participation rates by sex**

The participation rates of female youth, across age groups, are substantially lower than those of male youth, with young women aged 15 to 20 years in 1996 having the lowest participation rate of 31.8 per cent. Ordinarily, this would be considered a healthy sign under the assumption that many of them are in school. It is probable, however, that the lower rate is attributable to the fact that females at these ages serve as unpaid family labour (NYC 1998). Female youth in the age ranges 21 to 25 years and 26 to 30 years both have a lower labour force participation rate when compared to the participation rate of their male counterparts. The lower rates are largely attributed to reproductive and child-rearing responsibilities (NYC 1998).

Comparative data further suggest that the gap between male and female participation rates has not declined, with little change in the relativity between male and female participation rates between 1987 and 1997. Thus, women have maintained a disadvantageous position in the labour market (NYC 1998) (see Table IV.3 below).

**Table IV.3: Labour force participation rate by sex, 1987 to 1997**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Both sexes (per cent)</i>	<i>Male (per cent)</i>	<i>Female (per cent)</i>
1987	65.5	83.2	48.0
1988	66.1	84.2	48.3
1989	66.0	83.8	48.6
1990	64.4	81.9	47.2
1991	66.4	83.9	49.3
1992	66.0	83.9	48.4
1993	65.6	83.0	48.4
1994	65.5	83.0	48.2
1995	65.8	83.0	48.5
1996	65.8	83.0	48.5
1997	65.5	82.4	49.0

*Source:* National Statistical Office in NYC 1998.

**(b) Labour force participation rates by location**

In 1996, the labour force participation rates for youth were higher in rural areas than in the urban areas.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the participation rate for rural youth in the age bracket of 15 to 20 years was 49.7 per cent compared to 35.3 per cent for urban youth. It is possible that a number of rural youth join the labour force much earlier than their urban counterparts, due to the limited opportunities for tertiary studies in rural areas (NYC 1998) (see Table IV.4 below).

**Table IV.4: Labour force participation rate, youth workers, urban-rural, 1996**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Urban (per cent)</i>			<i>Rural (per cent)</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Both sexes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Both sexes</i>
15-20	38.6	32.1	35.3	62.7	33.4	49.7
21-25	85.7	56.8	71.2	91.6	54.4	71.5
26-30	96.6	54.4	74.6	98.6	46.6	73.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>79.7</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>62.0</b>

*Source:* National Statistical Office in NYC 1998.

<sup>1</sup> Cautionary note: Many rural areas were re-classified as urban from 1991, consequently labour force participation rates in urban areas tended to rise. However, many of the re-classified urban areas retained their rural characteristics.





In summary, the above figures indicate that in rural areas, the work opportunities are in agriculture and are largely available to men, whereas in urban areas, women hold many of the low paid jobs in services and clerical work.

### 3. Employed youth labour force

In 1994, the youth sector comprised the majority of the unemployed and the minority of the employed, with female youth even more vulnerable than their male counterparts. Of employed males, young men comprised 47.2 per cent of the total, whereas for employed females, young women represented 44.1 per cent of the total females in employment (see Table IV.5 below).

**Table IV.5: Proportion of employed and unemployed labour force by sex and age, 1994**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Employed (per cent)</i>		<i>Unemployed (per cent)</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
15-19	10.4	9.7	22.6	24.6
20-24	12.4 } 47.2	11.8 } 44.1	27.2 } 72.2	30.8 } 78.4
25-34	24.4	22.6	22.4	23
35-44	22.6	23.9	10.6	9.3
45-54	15.7	17.1	8.1	5.1
55-64	9.8	10.3	5.9	4.1
65+	4.7	4.6	3.1	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** 1994 Labour Force Survey in NYC 1998.

Youth are not only the least employable, but they are also one of the groups easily affected by economic downtrends. For example, in 1995 there was a net decrease in new jobs created for those in the age group 25 to 34 years, with zero new jobs created for those in the 20 to 24 year age bracket (see Table IV.6). There may, however, be an increase of job opportunities for youth in the future with the growth of Internet and e-commerce.

**Table IV.6: New jobs created by age group, 1994 to 1995**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>1994 (thousands)</i>	<i>1995 (thousands)</i>
15-19	60	111
20-24	52	0
25-34	7	-72
35-44	233	203
45-54	146	308
55-64	100	80
65+	55	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>682</b>

*Source:* 1994 and 1995 Labour Force Surveys in NYC 1998.

**(a) Distribution by sector**

Agriculture's share of employment decreased from 53.8 per cent in 1970 to 45.2 per cent in 1994. The services sector accounted for 23.7 per cent of total employment in 1970 but absorbed 33.5 per cent by 1994. Industry's share of employment was stable at close to 20 per cent (ILS 1996).

The agricultural sector has been the major source of employment, but the ratio of sectoral output by sectoral employment showed that the productivity in the agricultural sector was extremely low. This low level indicates a vast gap in productivity between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. It also indicates another possible problem with underemployment in the agricultural sector. While the bulk of workers are employed in agriculture, its share in production and income is the lowest. In contrast, the share of industry and services in the output is much higher than their employment shares (ILS 1996).

More than 40 per cent of youth are engaged in farming, fishing and forest-related work. Agricultural jobs are ill-paid and require little schooling. An equal proportion of youth is employed in services. These workers are largely found in community, social and personal services and wholesale and retail trade. These jobs are typically at the bottom of the ladder in terms of pay, skill and status (NYC 1998). Some 17 per cent of youth are employed in industry, although their share is rising as a result of industrialization efforts.



These figures indicate that a majority of rural youth is employed in agriculture, while a third of urban youth is employed in community and social services (NYC 1998).

***(b) Distribution by sex of worker***

Most of the young men were employed in agricultural and production jobs, while most of the young women were employed in sales and services jobs. Among young women workers, 23 per cent were employed in agriculture and a further 23 per cent were employed in sales and service work. This illustrates the fact that young women commonly occupy the bottom rung of the occupational ladder (NYC 1998).

An equal proportion of young men and young women were employed in administrative, executive and managerial positions, although many of the young women occupy lower administrative posts such as that of secretary. There is, however, a larger proportion (9.2 per cent) of young women occupying professional and technical positions, as compared to 2.8 per cent for young men (NYC 1998).

These figures indicate strong gender segregation in the Philippine labour market; that is, there are “traditionally male jobs” and “traditionally female jobs”. Such gender stereotyping in employment makes it difficult for equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation to effect the improvement of the position of women in the labour market. Indirect discrimination is often evident in highly gender segregated labour markets, where the maintenance of relativities between pay rates and conditions between “men’s work” and “women’s work” institutionalize existing labour market inequities. Indirect discrimination such as this is much more difficult to tackle than direct discrimination, whereby men are more highly paid for performing work of equal value as women.

***(c) Distribution by class of worker***

Of employed youth, the majority work for wages, and most of them work in urban areas. Fifty six per cent of employed youth were wage and salary workers, 20 per cent were own-account workers and 24 per cent were unpaid family workers. The proportion of unpaid family workers has not declined in favour of either wage or own-account workers, with percentage shares stable since 1988 (NYC 1998).

When the data are disaggregated by location, urban areas are shown to have a larger proportion of wage and salary earners than rural areas, with less than a third of urban youth workers being own account workers and about 10 per cent unpaid family workers. In rural areas, wage earners still represented the largest group; however, own account workers comprised 24 per cent of rural youth employment, while 34 per cent were unpaid family workers. Rural areas tend to have a larger proportion of unpaid workers, as many young farmhands perform work for their families (NYC 1998).

Government funding to promote and encourage entrepreneurship among both urban and rural youth may help reduce unemployment by assisting youth to start their own business enterprises.

***(d) Distribution by education level***

Among employed youth, an almost equal proportion of males and females had secondary schooling, whether graduates at 25 per cent or non-graduates at 16-18 per cent. Nonetheless, close to 30 per cent of young male workers had only elementary schooling, while a mere 17 per cent had some form of college education. By contrast, the proportion of young women workers with college schooling was almost twice that of young men, at 33 per cent (NYC 1998).

***(e) Wages and earnings***

While most young workers are likely to have agricultural jobs, it is those who have service and professional jobs who are paid more. Young professionals and technicians are the highest paid. In 1991, they made more than P 70,000 per year, on average. Those youth employed in managerial and administrative positions received P 67,000 per annum on average. Young workers in the service sector receive about P 45,000 per annum on average. They were followed closely by young manufacturing workers who earned about P 43,000 annually. Wages for young agricultural workers were significantly lower, at about one quarter of what young industrial workers received and only a sixth of what young professionals earned. Other occupations such as the military were also quite poorly paid. These workers received only slightly more, on average, than farmers (NYC 1998).



**Table IV.7: Unemployment rate by highest educational grade completed, 1993-1995**

<i>Highest grade completed</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>
No grade completed	5.4	5.9	5.9
Elementary	5.2	5.2	5.5
Some high school	10.9	11.2	11.5
High school graduate	12.6	12.4	12.2
Some college	16.3	16.9	16.1
College graduate	11.7	12.1	11.3

**Source:** NSO Integrated Survey of Households in NYC 1998.

Those workers with a college education earned the highest wages and those who had not attended school often received sub-minimum wages, within the range of P 9,000 to P 10,000 per year. The difference between the earnings of those people who had some high school education and those who had graduated from high school was substantial, indicating that the Philippine labour market places great importance on young workers completing educational stages (NYC 1998).

In 1996, young women workers, even those with more education, generally earned less than young male workers (Gonzales in NYC 1998). Young women with no schooling have virtually no chance of entering the labour market and those women that held positions at the same level as men were paid less on average than their male counterparts (NYC 1998).

#### **4. Unemployed youth**

In January 1995, the unemployment rate for those in the 15 to 24 year age group was high at 17 per cent. This age group accounted for 48 per cent of the total unemployed in 1995 (NYC, 1998:58)

##### **(a) Unemployment by age**

In 1996, the average rate of unemployment was highest among males in the 21 to 25 year age group, at 12.8 per cent. In contrast, the average rate of unemployment was highest among females in the 15 to 20 year age group, which stood at 18.2 per cent (NYC 1998) (see Table IV.8 below).

**(b) Unemployment by education completion**

One disturbing finding was that between 1993 and 1995, those people with more education found it difficult to find employment. High school graduates experienced very similar unemployment rates to college graduates (see Table IV.7 above). This may suggest that there is a shortage of high-skill, high-paying jobs suitable for those with high education. It may also indicate that the education is failing to provide students with the skills required to attain high-skill, high-paying jobs.

**(c) Unemployment by location**

Despite the unavailability of youth unemployment statistics by region, in 1998 unemployment rates were considerably higher in the National Capital Region (NCR) than in other regions. The lowest regional unemployment rates were seen in Region II and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), at 4.1 per cent and 4.8 per cent respectively.

The unemployment rates for male and female youth in urban areas were fairly similar in 1996; however, the unemployment rate for female rural youth was considerably higher than for their male rural counterparts (see Table IV.8 below).

In 1996, the employment rate for male youth in the 15 to 20 year age bracket and the 21 to 25 year bracket indicates that urban male youth unemployment was considerably higher than rural male youth unemployment in the same age groups. Female unemployment was high in both rural and urban areas (see Table IV.8 below).

**Table IV.8: Youth unemployment rate by sex and by location, 1996**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>Male (per cent)</i>	<i>Female (per cent)</i>
<b>Philippines</b>	15-20	12.75	18.23
	21-25	12.84	17.94
	26-30	7.43	9.31
<b>Urban</b>	15-20	22.04	18.68
	21-25	17.72	17.44
	26-30	10.90	11.07
<b>Rural</b>	15-20	7.84	17.76
	21-25	8.23	18.51
	26-30	4.20	7.11

**Source:** NSO Integrated Survey of Households in NYC 1998.



The statistics included in the section above support the argument that rural to urban migration is contributing to urban rates of unemployment, as many rural workers move to the NCR in search of work, often without success. This seems to be particularly so in the case of male youth (NYC 1998).

## **5. Underemployment**

In 1996, on average, only 32 per cent of employed youth worked more than 40 hours per week. This proportion barely fluctuated between 1994 and 1996. This suggests that there exists a considerable number of underemployed youth in the Philippine labour market, notwithstanding the situation of some youth combining part-time work with studies (NYC 1998).

## **C. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Barriers to employment access**

Traditional cultural bias against women contributes to the relatively high incidence of female out-of-school youth, specifically in the predominantly Muslim areas (NYC 1998). For example, the majority of out-of-school youth were females and housekeeping was the most common type of activity undertaken by these females. Searching for work was a far second, suggesting that the obligations associated with home duties present a major barrier to female youth seeking and obtaining employment (NYC 1998).

Of those youth not enrolled in school and not currently in employment, the majority, or 64 per cent, had no plans of going back to school. It is therefore necessary to find alternative ways to provide education outside the formal school system, particularly for those who have not completed basic education. Employment opportunities for youth will be improved if an alternative education system is promoted in the Philippines (NYC 1998).

The increasing number of youth who migrate to urban areas places a great deal of pressure upon the urban areas to generate sufficient employment for the immigrants. Many of the youth that move to urban areas find themselves without jobs. Studies by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) also suggest that migration has contributed to the neglect of agriculture. There is a need for youth policy makers to target rural youth as beneficiaries of livelihood, skills training, entrepreneurship training and other types of non-formal education. Such initiatives may help stem the migration of youth to urban areas, at the same time as stimulating local agricultural development (NYC 1998).

## 2. Child labour

The protection of the rights and promotion of children's well-being are state policies that are enshrined in the Constitution of 1987. The Labour Code contains provisions on minimum employable age (Article 139); minimum age for apprenticeships (Article 150); the prohibition against child discrimination (Article 140); and some of the specific provisions of the Child and Welfare Code are pertinent to the conditions of working children. Republic Act numbers 7610 and 7658 were promulgated for child protection and child labour in particular. These laws seek to prohibit the employment of children, especially when work impairs their normal development (ILS 1996).

Despite laws and penal provisions being in place, as well as advocacy campaigns and information dissemination against child labour, the lack of effective monitoring and enforcement activities means that child labour is an issue of concern for employment policy makers in the Philippines. Data from the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that the number of economically active children between 10 and 17 years in 1992 stood at 2.17 million representing a labour force participation rate of 17.7 per cent (ILS 1996) (see Table IV.9 below).

**Table IV.9: Child labour in the Philippines, 1980 to 1992**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Labour force (thousands)</i>	<i>Participation rate (per cent)</i>	<i>Employed (thousands)</i>	<i>Employment rate (per cent)</i>
10-14	1980	932	12.7	875	93.8
	1984	797	12.7	758	95.2
	1989	815	11.1	790	97.0
	1992	741	9.7	722	97.4
15-17	1980	1,201	30.7	1,103	91.9
	1984	1,515	36.9	1,373	90.6
	1989	1,368	32.0	1,259	92.1
	1992	1,436	30.8	1,327	92.4
10-17	1980	2,134	19.0	1,979	92.7
	1984	2,312	22.3	2,132	92.2
	1989	2,183	18.8	2,050	93.9
	1992	1,277	17.7	2,049	94.4

**Source:** Comprehensive Report on Child Labour in the Philippines (1994) in ILS 1996.





The majority (81.3 per cent) of employed children aged 10 to 14 years were employed in the agricultural sector. About 7.6 per cent were found in sales, 5.5 per cent in services and 5.3 per cent in production and related work, transport and equipment operations (ILS 1996).

### **3. Lack of protection**

Many of the working youth in the Philippines are not protected by minimum wage provisions, especially those working in rural areas. For example, a survey conducted in 1997 found that 47 per cent of young workers who were surveyed earned P 3,000 or below, while 16 per cent earned between P 3,000 and P 4,000. The same survey found that a majority of working youth earned less than the national poverty threshold at the time (P 5,000) (NYC 1998).

For many young women, not even a college education could guarantee them minimum wage payments. A 1995 ILO study found that 63 per cent of male children surveyed and 88 per cent of female children surveyed earned less than P 90 daily. Similarly, a Bureau of Women and Young Workers survey undertaken in 1995 found that the majority of respondents working in the food, garment, wood and metal industry belonged to the 15 to 16 year age group, and that many received daily earnings as low as P 10 (NYC 1998).

While the Labour Code explicitly states that minors between the ages of 15 and 17 years are not permitted, under any circumstances, to work in hazardous undertakings, research suggests that more than one million minors between the ages of 15 and 17 years were engaged in hazardous work in 1995. Many of these workers were young male farm workers, subject to chemicals, insufficient illumination, viruses and bacteria. Similarly, in urban areas, many young workers are exposed to liquid chemicals, fumes, vapours, high temperatures and humid conditions, poor lighting and ventilation. Other unfavourable working conditions include the lack of a clean water supply, unsanitary environment and flooding in work areas. An International Labour Studies (ILS) survey in 1991 found that almost all garment, footwear and handicraft firms failed to supply children with protective devices such as gloves and masks.

### **4. Poor access to social security**

Social security benefits in the form of health care, retirement and social disability pensions, and other minor assistance such as maternity and funeral benefits remain largely unavailable to youth. Only those working in the formal sector are covered by social security. Of the approximately 20

million youth in the labour market, only 13.8 per cent are covered by social security. Of those, some 11 per cent are non-contributing members as they are temporarily out of their job, or their employers do not remit their contributions. Of special interest is the 15 to 17 year age bracket, where research suggests that only 1 per cent of working youth in this age group were entitled to social security benefits (NYC 1998).

## **5. Unionization**

Based on data from the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), only 11 per cent of the total labour force were union members and only 2.3 per cent were covered by collective bargaining agreements. Casualization of the labour force accompanied by high levels of unemployment make it difficult for trade unions to recruit new members in the Philippines. The use of temporary and casual workers, in many cases these being young workers, can serve to drive wages down, and in times of weak demand, it is easy for employers to get rid of workers in these categories.

## **6. Migration**

In 1996 it was estimated that the Philippines had to create between half a million and one million new jobs annually to accommodate the youth entering its labour force (Martin and Widgren 1996, cited in NYC 1998). As a result, many Filipinos look beyond their immediate surroundings in search of better economic opportunities. These may either be within the Philippine national labour market or in the international labour market.

Young women form an increasing proportion of both internal and international migrant workers. There is also a shift away from more secure jobs to less secure jobs in both domestic and international labour markets. Migration is, therefore, an issue of great importance to youth policy makers in the Philippines.

### **(a) Internal labour migration**

In 1988, a National Demographic Survey found that women outnumbered male migrants in almost all age groups except at ages 35 to 44 years. Women migrants aged 15 to 24 years comprised more than one fourth of all internal migrants. It further found that rural women aged 15 to 24 years had a higher propensity for urban migration than men. Unmarried persons, particularly single females, were more likely to migrate than married persons (United Nations 1995). Such trends, which correlate increased rates of urban unemployment and increased rates of urban migration, indicate that rural to urban migration is an important employment policy issue in the Philippines.



***(b) International labour migration***

The Philippines is one of the world's major migrant-sending countries, and, not surprisingly, many of these migrants are youth.

Since the late 1960s the Philippines has provided labour for labour-scarce countries. In 1974, at a time when the Philippine economy was facing slow economic growth, problems of high unemployment and recurring balance of payments problems became common features in the economy. The government introduced the stop-gap measure of the Philippine Overseas Employment Programme as one strategy to tackle high domestic unemployment. The number of overseas Filipino workers increased from 3,694 in 1969 to almost 4.2 million Filipino overseas workers in 1995 (official estimate). Of these, 2.4 million were documented or contract workers, while approximately 1.8 million were undocumented or illegal workers. The average yearly deployment was placed at 650,000 people in 1996 (ILS 1996).

The bulk of these workers (64.2 per cent) go to the Middle East, with a gradual shift towards labour-short countries of East Asia and South East Asia, with the share increasing from 23 per cent in 1987 to 34.4 per cent in 1995 (ILS 1996).

In 1992, women constituted 51 per cent of land-based workers leaving annually to work abroad. Women migrants outnumbered males at all ages except in the young age group of below 15 years. In terms of marital status, 1990 data indicate that married women were twice as likely to emigrate as married men (ILS 1996). In 1990, there were more single women emigrating than single men. Research suggests a rising demand for young female Filipino workers in many countries, where they are usually engaged in low-wage jobs in domestic service (NYC 1998). A shift away from the more stable, protected and high-paying jobs to less stable service and production jobs has also been experienced in the past decade (NYC 1998).

In terms of educational background, female emigrants had higher educational attainment than their male counterparts, with about 45 per cent of women emigrants possessing at least a college level education, as compared to 41 per cent of males (United Nations 1995).

The young international migrants increasingly originate from outside metropolitan Manila, with a gradual rise in the number of young migrants originating from Ilocos, the Visayas regions, and Southern Tagalog. Mindanao has been a weakening source of young international migrants; however, this is probably due to the political instability experienced in many

parts of the region (NYC 1998). In all of the regions except for Metropolitan Manila and Visayas, there was an increase in the proportion of young women going abroad to seek jobs between 1993 and 1995 (NYC 1998).

In response to the reliance upon foreign employment to absorb Filipino workers, the government of the Philippines has shifted its policy away from the use of labour contract migration as a tool to address the national labour shortage, towards one of effectively managing worker outflow.

A key element in this shift was the enactment of the Republic Act No. 8042 of 1995, which established standards of protection of the welfare of migrant workers, their families, and overseas Filipinos in distress. The Act also provides for mandatory repatriation of under-age Filipino migrant workers (NYC 1998). The Act was introduced in an effort to provide mechanisms to address some of the social costs of international labour migration, such as temporary separation of family members, break-down in families, and negative impacts on the psycho-social development of vulnerable groups, such as children and women. There is a danger that negative social costs resulting from international labour migration may outweigh the economic benefits gained from foreign employment.

There have been frequent reports of sexual and physical abuse, maltreatment and even murder of Filipino women workers at the hands of foreign employers. Many of these victims have been youth (United Nations 1995). There is often a lack of protective legislation and scarce on-site support systems for foreign workers.

These factors make labour migration a major issue of importance for youth policy makers in the Philippines.

#### **D. CHALLENGES FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

Young workers face discrimination in the form of low income, poor access to social security, inadequate information about workers' rights, and hazardous and stressful working conditions. Young women are in a particularly disadvantageous position as compared with their male counterparts.

One of the most pressing policy concerns is the issue of inadequate expansion of labour demand. Job creation has been too slow to absorb the number of young workers who enter the labour force each year, where the types of jobs in which they are employed are commonly low skilled and low paid in nature. There is a need for continuing investment in human capital in the Philippines and a further need for improved enforcement of labour standards and laws.



There are very few opportunities for growth and development for youth in rural communities. Agriculture is viewed as an undesirable profession. It is necessary to improve the opportunities for education, livelihood and other social services in rural areas to reverse the flow of rural to urban migration. Additional training and employment initiatives for rural youth should be made available to assist with employment generation. Flexibility in the school calendar to fit in with agricultural lifestyles should also be considered to help rural youth combine education and employment more easily. This may reduce some of the pressure placed on the urban labour market as a result of migration of rural youth to urban areas in search of employment.

Youth policy makers in the Philippines have placed a great deal of emphasis upon education in their efforts to improve the situation of youth in the Philippines. The relationship between education and employment is strong and complex and Filipino youth are often faced with choosing between school and work, due to financial difficulties in the family. Educational reforms will only be successful if there is a match between supply and demand in the labour market. It appears that many of the students undertaking education and technical training are not gaining the skills demanded by industry. For example, the Filipino labour market suffers from a glut of tertiary commerce and business management graduates, while it faces a shortage of suitably skilled information technology graduates. Education and training institutions should better plan to match the demand and supply of labour. There is also a need for increased involvement from the private sector in vocational education and technical skills training.

The legislation and policy framework is in place in the Philippines and now the more difficult challenge ahead is the implementation of strategies and programmes identified as priorities for youth employment in the medium-term. The devolution of services to the local government level presents a major barrier to the successful implementation of strategies. Many local governments are not equipped to respond to youth employment and training issues, due to inadequate resources and trained personnel. The NYC, as the primary youth policy and coordinating structure, often does not have trained personnel at the local level and there are very few youth-specific employment initiatives. While the PMTYDP identifies the major challenges and presents strategies for addressing these challenges, how such strategies will be funded and mechanisms will be established for coordination of such strategies are not spelled out.

**Table IV.10: Legislation, policies and conventions relevant to youth in the Philippines**

**A. MINIMUM WORKING AGE**

**1. Local legislation and policies**

- Labour Code of the Philippines. Art. 139 (a) (Minimum Employable Age)
- Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labour Code, Book III, Rule XII, Sec. 2 (Employable Age)
- Republic Act No. 7658 (An Act prohibiting the employment of children below 15 years of age in public and private undertakings, amending for this purpose Section 12, Article VIII of RA 7610)
- Department Order No. 18, Rules and Regulations Implementing RA No. 7658
- Labour Code of the Philippines Art. 139 (b, c)
- Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labour Code, Book III, Rule XII, Sec. 3
- Department Order No. 4, Series of 1999 (Hazardous Work and Activities to Persons Below 18 Years of Age)
- Republic Act No. 7610 (An Act providing for stronger deterrence and special protection against child abuse, exploitation and discrimination, providing penalties for its violation and for other purposes) Sec. 14
- Republic Act No. 6809 (An Act to amend Article 402 of the Civil Code of the Philippines in order to lower the age of majority from 21 to 18 years)
- Labour Code of the Philippines Art. 58 (Apprentices)
- Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labour Code (Book II, Rule VI, Sec. 11)
- Child and Youth Welfare Code (PD 603) Title VI, Chapter 2, Art. 107 (Working Children)

**2. Ratified international conventions**

- ILO Convention No. 59 (Minimum Age for Admission of Children to Industrial Employment)
- ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment)
- ILO Recommendation No. 146 (Recommendation Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 32



## **B. PROTECTION**

### **1. Local legislation and policies**

- Philippine Constitution, Art. II Sec. 13 (Declaration of Principles and State Policies)
- Art. II, Sec. 18 (Labour)
- Art. III, Sec. 3 (Rights of Labour)
- Art. II, Sec. I (Equal Protection)
- Child and Youth Welfare Code (PD 603) Art. 3 (Rights of the Child)
- Republic Act No. 7610 (An Act providing for stronger deterrence and special protection against child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, providing penalties for its violation and for other purposes)
- Child and Youth Welfare Code, Arts. 104-106

### **2. Ratified international conventions**

- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 10 Par. 3
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 32

## **C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **1. Local legislation and policies**

- Labour Code of the Philippines, Art. 140 (Prohibition Against Child Discrimination)
- Child and Youth Welfare Code (PD 603) Art. 108 (Duty of Employer to Submit Report)
- Art 109 (Register of children)
- Department Order No. 18, Rules and Regulations Implementing RA No. 7658
- Department Order No. 4, Series of 1999 (Hazardous Work and Activities to Persons Below 18 Years of Age)
- Rules and Regulations on the Employment of Children in the Movie, Television, Radio and Entertainment Industry
- Labour Code of the Philippines Art. 61-68 (Apprenticeship Agreements)
- Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labour Code, Book II, Rule VI, Sec. 19-40 (Apprenticeship Training of and Employment of Special Workers)
- Labour Code of the Philippines Arts. 143-152 (Employment of Househelpers)
- Civil Code of the Philippines, Book IV, Title VIII, Chapter 3, Section 1, Arts. 1589-1699 (Household Service)
- Child and Youth Welfare Code (PD 603) Title VI, Chapter II, Art. 110

- Republic Act No. 7655 (An Act prescribing the minimum wage of househelpers based on the economic classification of the cities/municipalities where they are located)
- Department Order No. 5, Rule XIV of the Rules Implementing Book III of the Labour Code on Employment of Homeworkers
- Labour Code of the Philippines Arts. 83, 85, 92 and 95 (Working Hours and Rest Periods)
- Labour Code of the Philippines Arts. 86, 87, 90, 93, 94, 102-105, 111-119 (Wages)
- President Decree No. 851 (13<sup>th</sup> Month Pay Law)
- Labour Code of the Philippines, Arts. 156, 157, 161 (Occupation Safety and Health)
- Labour Code of the Philippines, Arts. 166, 168, 170-173, 175, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191-194, 196 (Employees Compensation and State Insurance Fund)
- Republic Act No. 8282 (An Act further strengthening the social security system thereby amending for this purpose RA 1161, as amended, otherwise known as the Social Security Law)
- Labour Code of the Philippines, Art. 279 (Security of Tenure)

## **2. Ratified international conventions**

- ILO Convention No. 77 (Medical Examination for Fitness for Employment in Industry of Children and Young Persons)
- ILO Convention No. 90 (Night Work of Young Persons Employed in Industry)

## **D. RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES**

### **1. Local policies**

- Philippine Constitution, Art. XV, Sec. 3 (Rights of Children)
- Art. III, Sec. 8 (Right of Association)
- Art. XIII, Sec. I (Social Justice and Human Rights)
- Child and Youth Welfare Code, Art. 3
- Labour Code of the Philippines
- Child and Youth Welfare Code, Chapter 3 Arts. 111, 113, 114
- Republic Act No. 7323 (An Act to help poor but deserving students pursue their education by encouraging their employment during summer and/or Christmas vacation)
- Rules and Regulation Implementing RA 7323 (SPEs)

### **2. Ratified international conventions**

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



# Youth Participation

# V

## A. BACKGROUND

Filipino youth have frequently participated in events that have shaped national directions. The first youth organizations were established in the country during the American 'peaceful' colonization period, with youth political parties formed during the 1930s and 1940s. A national student organization, Kabataang Makabayan (KM), was formed in 1964. During the turbulent decade of the 1960s, splinter groups – for example the Malayang Pagkakaia ng kabataang Pilipino (MPKP) and the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) – broke away from KM (NYC 1997b).

Other more moderate youth groups also formed in the 1960s, predominantly along religious lines. Such 'moderate' groups campaigned on issues such as reducing the voting age to 18 years and provision of a Magna Carta of Students Rights. Although considered 'moderate' in their leanings, the students held parallel protests coinciding with those of peasants, workers and more radical students (NYC 1997b).

In 1970 and 1971, radical and moderate organizations such as KM, SDK, the MPKP and the National Union of Students (NUS) launched protest activities against the Marcos regime in campuses and communities nationwide. Young intellectuals vowed solidarity with the impoverished Filipino masses, some pursuing the revolutionary path being waged in the countryside by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP). In the South, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), led by a young Muslim intellectual, challenged the highly centralist administration. By 1972, President Marcos declared martial law and the burgeoning people's movement was suppressed (NYC 1997b).

Soon after the military crackdown many student activists went abroad or underground, with a long period of silence in the communities and campuses. Through the Marcos Administration, one generation of young politicians was bypassed, owing to the absence of democratic elections. In 1975, the President issued a decree creating the Kabataang *Barangay* (KB), which became the government's youth arm. This organization failed to develop youth as a democratic force so many other cause-oriented youth groups emerged (NYC 1997b).

Youth action in the 1980s saw student groups rally around the issue of academic freedom. When martial law was lifted, student groups were involved in a series of negotiations with education and defence officials, calling for academic freedom and for recalling military detachments from school premises. In order to coordinate the action of various groups and student councils, the Student Leaders' Forum (SLF) was established in 1983. Other militant and moderate groups also formed after martial law was lifted.

After the people power revolt in 1986, militant student activism was reduced. Youth became more involved in the affairs of government, shifting their focus to work from the inside. Many people-power inspired youth groups formed, such as Laka ng Sambayanan, Lasak ng kabataang Pilipino (LKP), Volunteers for Popular Democracy, and Movement for the Advancement of Student Power (MASP) (NYC 1997b).

In June 1986, a government-sponsored KB study group recommended that the KB be abolished and replaced with a national youth commission. They also recommended the establishment of a national youth assembly, confederation of youth organizations and youth representation in the government. In response, the government abolished the KB National Secretariat and organized national youth consultations. A meeting in 1997 brought together some 400 youth leaders who drew up 42 resolutions covering issues such as students' rights, education, land reform, tuition fees, women's issues, human rights, US military bases and peace. The delegates also reaffirmed the recommendations made earlier by the KB study group (NYC 1997b).

The Aquino Administration established the Presidential Council for Youth Affairs (PCYA), which had much more limited powers and functions than the youth commission that students had envisaged. The representation of youth in Congress between 1988 and 1990 contributed to the introduction of the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC) that outlined the election process for *barangay* SK representatives.



It was not until enactment of Republic Act 8044, the Youth in National Building Act of 1995, that a legislative framework was introduced to promote youth welfare and development. The Youth in Nation Building Act mandated the establishment of the National Youth Commission (NYC), to serve as the government's direct link to youth in terms of policy and programme formulation and implementation. The Act mandates the NYC to coordinate the formulation of a national comprehensive and coordinated programme on youth development. This programme has three major components:

- formulation of the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP);
- study on the situation of youth; and
- coordination of all organizations delivering services for youth.

The Act also mandated the creation of a national youth parliament, to be convened every two years. The first National Youth Parliament was convened in 1996 and the second National Youth Parliament in 1998.

Youth are identified as a major sub-sector in Republic Act No. 8425, which mandated the creation of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). The Act institutionalizes the participation of all sectors and NGOs in effective planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Social Reform Agenda (SRA).

In 1998, the Republic Act 7941 was enacted, also known as the Party List Law. It established sectoral representatives from the various marginalized or under-represented national, regional and sectoral parties, organizations, or coalitions to have a seat in the Congress outside the regular House Representative positions. As youth was specified as a marginalized group, the first youth representatives joined Congress in 1998.<sup>1</sup>

Filipino youth have been quite successful in lobbying for a greater political voice, despite the fragmentation that exists among various youth organizations. Coalition building is required now that mechanisms and structures have been put in place so that increased participation of Filipino youth in socio-political life can be facilitated.

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<sup>1</sup> This representative became known as National Youth Commissioners-at-large since enactment of RA 8044 Youth in Nation Building Act of 1995.

## **B. VOICE OF YOUTH**

There have been several important initiatives introduced in the Philippines aimed at increasing the avenues available to Filipino youth to share and voice their ideas and experiences. One of the most significant initiatives is the National Youth Parliament (NYP).

Convening of the NYP every two years was mandated by RA 8044, a landmark policy of the Ramos Administration. The Act stipulates that National Youth Parliament delegates be chosen by the Commission, taking into account equal and geographical representation among men and women. The delegates are given the responsibility of electing the President of the Youth Parliament, who presides over the session of Parliament.

The responsibilities of the Parliament delegates are as follows:

- Act as provincial/city/sectoral coordinators of the NYC for two years;
- Liaise and network for the NYC, and provide required feedback/reports in line with the Medium Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP);
- Participate actively in youth activities and projects; and
- Assume the role of youth advocates in their respective areas and sectors.

The delegates elect their Parliament officers comprising the following positions: President, President Pro-Tempore, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Majority Floor Leader, Senior Assistant Floor Leader, Junior Assistant Floor Leader, Vice-President for Luzon, Vice-President for Visayas, Vice-President for Mindanao and Sergeant at Arms.

### **1. First National Youth Parliament**

The first National Youth Parliament was convened from 9 to 13 December 1996 in Manila. There were 240 youth leaders present representing 77 provinces, 26 cities and the National Capital Region (NCR). The four sub-sectors of in-school youth, out-of-school youth, working youth and special youth were represented, as was the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). At the conclusion of the first National Youth Parliament, 117 resolutions were passed, which formed the basis for action over the following two years.



Standing Working Committees were organized to enable all representatives to become actively involved in the planning, and policy formulation. Eight policy priority areas were established for the standing working committees:

- in-school youth
- out-of-school youth
- working youth
- youth with special needs
- economic development
- political affairs
- social and cultural concerns
- youth for environmental protection.

## **2. Second National Youth Parliament**

The second National Youth Parliament (NYP) was held from 18 to 21 December 1998 in Baguio City. Technical experts from the government and non-government sectors were invited to give presentations to the delegates.

Fourteen standing committees were approved by the second NYP with 43 resolutions passed by the conclusion of proceedings. They were as follows:

### ***(a) Committee of Agriculture and Rural Youth***

Three resolutions were passed pertaining to agriculture and rural youth. They were concerned with the establishment of an agricultural programme for youth through collaboration between the National Youth Commission (NYC) and the Department of Agriculture (DA); a request for additional funding to the DA and local government units; and agrarian reform and land title ownership.

### ***(b) Committee on Employment and Entrepreneurship***

Two resolutions were passed under this standing committee. They were concerned with the establishment of a youth savings mobilization programme; the establishment of working youth centres in all local government units; and the re-sponsorship of a bill on the institutionalization of entrepreneurial technology subjects in the secondary education curricula.

***(c) Committee of Health and Population***

Three resolutions were passed pertaining to youth health and population. The first related to youth representation on the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the second called for the full implementation by the relevant government departments of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons. The third related to support for programmes on Adolescent Health and Youth Development.

***(d) Committee on Education, Science and Information Technology***

Four resolutions were passed under this standing committee area. The first related to support for the army's basic literacy programme; the second related to support for tertiary scholarships; while the third urged immediate passage by the government of a genuine Magna Carta of the Students. The fourth resolution requested the integration of secondary and tertiary level education for those with different abilities.

***(e) Committee on National and Local Governance***

Three resolutions were passed pertaining to national and local governance. The first related to Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) reform. The second called for the creation of an autonomous and independent youth umbrella organization for Filipino youth. The third related to the genuine essence of local autonomy.

***(f) Committee on Sports Development***

Of the three resolutions passed under this standing committee, the first urged the NYC to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC). The second resolution urged the PSC to conduct an annual information campaign about their programmes and the benefits of sport; while the third urged the continuation of local government olympics.

***(g) Committee on Family and Values***

Three resolutions were passed concerning family and values. The first urged a redefinition of the role of the Movie, Television and Radio Regulatory and Control Board (MTRRCB). The second resolution urged Congress to enact



a law providing prosecuting powers to the Commission for Human Rights (CHR) on matters concerning violations of children and human rights. The third resolution called for the inclusion of parenting skills and values education in all tertiary level education.

***(h) Committee on Culture and Arts***

A resolution was passed requesting each city and municipality, through their respective Sanggunians with the *Barangay* Council, to hold an Annual Cultural and Arts Awareness Week. A further resolution was passed requesting the President to issue a Memorandum mandating all provinces, cities and municipalities to create a Cultural Arts and Historical Council.

***(i) Committee on Environment***

Three resolutions were passed pertaining to the environment. They were concerned with requests for the creation of the Green Brigades to promote environmental awareness among youth; the establishment of an annual National Youth Environmental Leadership Institute; as well as the deputizing of the NYP to monitor and report on non-government organizations suspected of undertaking bio-prospecting activities

***(j) Committee on International Affairs***

Four resolutions were passed pertaining to international affairs. They were a request for the NYC to encourage other national youth organizations to urge their governments to adhere to the international agreement on Overseas Foreign Workers; a request urging the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to accredit NYP representatives to serve as official delegates to United Nations conferences; the establishment of a centre for transnational crime in Manila; and the designation of liaison officers in the DFA and houses of Congress on matters relating to youth.

***(k) Committee on Indigenous People***

Three resolutions were passed under this standing committee. The first related to a resolution requesting the President for immediate action on the appointment of the Chairman of the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP). The second referred to a request for the inclusion of studies

about ethnic communities in all elementary, secondary, college and university curricula. Finally, the third resolution requested the establishment of a youth desk in the national, regional, provincial and municipal level offices of the National Commission on Indigenous People.

***(l) Committee on Political and Electoral Reform***

Two resolutions were made pertaining to political and electoral reform. The first urged the NYC through the National Federation of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) to conduct annual multi-sectoral youth leader assemblies in coordination with NYP area coordinators, and the second requested the election of senators by region.

***(m) Committee on Peace and Order***

There were three resolutions concerning peace and order. The first urged for the implementation of the Muslim Youth Agenda adopted at the first NYP, the second requested enactment of a law providing for a Citizens Rescue Training Course and the third urges inclusion of peace studies in the education curriculum.

***(n) Committee on Women and Gender Sensitivity***

A resolution was passed urging the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) and Local Government Units to establish a Women's Desk in educational institutions and barangay offices.

Three additional resolutions were passed by the Committee on Rules. These related to the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, youth representation on the National Council for the Welfare of the Disabled Persons, and support for the Unlad Kabataan Programme for out-of-school youth.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Youth Parliament was attended by representatives of the following: Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), youth leaders, in-school youth, out-of-school youth, working youth, special youth, youth-serving organizations, and representing organization from each region.

By December 2000, the Third Youth Parliament will be convened and a new set of officers will be elected.





## **C. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

### **1. Voting**

The electoral participation of the Filipino youth started only after the enactment of the 1935 Philippine Constitution, which extended suffrage to all citizens 21 years old and over. A more active and vigorous electoral participation was noted when younger segments of Filipino youth began to get involved in the electorate as a result of the 1973 Philippine Constitution that lowered voting age to 18 years.

As mandated in the Resolution of the Constitution of 1987, the following requirements to vote exist:

- Must be a citizen of the Philippines;
- Must be at least 18 years of age;
- Must have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and at least six months immediately preceding the election in the place where he or she proposes to vote; and
- Must not be otherwise disqualified by law.

Based on the National Statistical Office (NSO) Philippine Population Projection for 1995, the number of youth under the age bracket of 18 to 20 years numbered 4,225,368 and those aged 21 to 24 years numbered 4,882,735. The total youth in the voting age bracket of 18 to 24 was 9,108,103.

The total number of registered voters in the 1995 elections was 36,415,154, of which only 25,736,505, or 70.7 per cent of the voting population, actually voted. There were no available data on the number of youth aged 18 to 24 years who voted.

At the local level, Filipino youth aged 18 to 21 years are also eligible to register and vote in the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections. Their participation is discussed in greater detail below.

### **2. Political representation**

#### **(a) *Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)***

To institutionalize the involvement of the youth in local governance, the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) was created through the 1991 Local Government Code.

The SK is to be a non-partisan mechanism for youth participation in politics. Each *barangay* has a Katipunan ng Kabataan, which is an assembly of youth in the *barangay*. The membership of the Katipunan ng Kabataan may be comprised of youth of at least 15 years and not more than 21 years of age, who have been actual residents of the *barangay* for the past six months, and are registered in the SK. The Katipunan ng Kabataan is mandated to meet at least once every three months (NYC 1997b). Members of the Katipunan ng Kabataan are eligible to vote and be elected in the SK elections (NYC 1997b).

The first SK elections took place on 4 December 1992 in approximately 43,000 *barangays* nationwide (NYC 1997b). On May 6, 1996, a SK election was held. Only 4,284,178 or 47 per cent of the 9,108,103 youth aged 18 to 24 years were registered to vote; and only 3,340,926 or 77.9 per cent of those registered actually voted in the SK election.

#### **(b) National Movement of Young Legislators (NMYL)**

The first batch of young government officials was elected in January 1988. Some 1,028 youth were elected mostly as councillors in the city and municipal councils and as provincial board members.

In 1991, the National Movement of Young Legislators (NMYL) was formed. Membership stood at around 5,000 after the 1995 elections. The NMYL is comprised of vice governors, vice mayors, board members, city/municipal councilors and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) presidents. By 1997, young officials comprised around one-third of the total local bureaucracy (NYC 1997b).

### **3. Political parties**

#### **(a) National government**

Participation in national governance is open to registered organized groups, not to individual candidates. Organized groups can be divided into the following categories:

- A Sectoral Party is an organized group of citizens whose principal advocacy pertains to the special interests and concerns of the following sectors: labour, youth, women, peasants, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, elderly, handicapped, overseas workers, fisherfolk, veterans and professionals;



- A Sectoral Organization is a group of qualified voters bound together by employment interests or other common concerns;
- A Coalition is an organization of duly-registered national, regional, sectoral parties or organizations for political and or election purposes; and
- A Political Party is an organized group of qualified voters pursuing the same ideology, political ideal and principles for the general conduct of the government. It may be a national party or regional party.

**(b) Local government**

An elected local official must meet the following requirements:

- Be a citizen of the Philippines;
- Be a registered voter in the *Barangay*, Municipality, City or Province, or in the case of a member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Panglungsod or Sangguniang Bayan in the district where he or she intends to be elected;
- Be a resident in these areas for at least one year immediately preceding the day of the election; and
- Be able to read and write Filipino or any other local language or dialect.

Age requirements vary by position:

- Governor, Vice Governor or member of Sangguniang Panlalawigan or Mayor, Vice-Mayor or Member of the Sangguniang Panglungsod of highly urbanized cities must be at least 23 years of age on election day;
- Mayor and Vice-Mayor of independent component cities or municipalities – must be at least 23 years of age on election day;
- Member of the Sangguniang Panglungsod or Sangguniang Bayan – must be at least 18 years of age on election day;
- Punong *Barangay* or member of the Sangguniang *Barangay* – must be at least 18 years of age on election day; and
- Sangguniang Kabataan must be at least 15 years of age, but not more than 21 years of age on election day.

#### **4. Government programmes aimed at increasing political awareness**

##### **(a) ISKOLAR**

The Integrated SK Organizational Leadership and Re-orientation Programme (ISKOLAR) was developed by the National Youth Commission (NYC) with the aim of developing an entire generation of empowered Sangguniang Kabataan leaders who will actively act as catalysts of change and development in Philippine society. The ISKOLAR programme is an integrated, comprehensive training programme designed to provide SK representatives with skills and knowledge necessary to become effective, efficient and responsive youth leaders (NYC 1997b).

##### **(b) *Linggo Ng Kabataan (Youth Week)***

Every province, city, municipality and *barangay* is charged with the responsibility of conducting an annual activity known as the Linggo Ng Kabataan, or Youth Week, during the second week of December.

During this week, youth elections are held to find boy and girl officials who for the duration of the week occupy the position of local official. During this week, boy and girl officials from 13 to 17 years shall perform the duties and conduct activities as may be provided in the ordinance enacted pursuant to the CODE's IRR.

Commemoration of young Filipino heroes, award ceremonies recognizing achievements made by outstanding youth organizations, awareness campaigns on youth issues are also conducted during this week (NYC 1997b).

##### **(c) *Anak Bukid (Farm Youth)***

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) manages the "Anak Bukid" (Farm Youth) programme in conjunction with the Philippines 4-H Club. This programme aims to increase political awareness and community leadership among rural youth. Community-based projects are undertaken which provide youth members with knowledge and skills in agriculture, homemaking and appreciation of rural life.

#### **D. YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS**

A Social Weather Station (SWS) survey conducted in 1996 found that 10 per cent of Filipino youth were involved in a youth organization. 6 per cent were involved in arts, music or educational organizations, 3 per cent in a



charitable organization and one per cent in a political party, labour union or professional association. Some 60 per cent of those surveyed said they were disinterested in politics (NYC, 1997).

The development of youth programmes in the Philippines has been marked by the active involvement of both government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Enactment of Republic Act No. 8044, the Youth in Nation Building Act, mandated the National Youth Commission (NYC) with the responsibility of assisting and coordinating with government agencies and NGOs in the implementation of all programmes and projects relative to youth promotion and development. It further mandated the NYC with the responsibility of seeking or requesting assistance from government agencies and NGOs in pursuance of NYC policies, programmes and projects.

Several organizations aim to increase youth participation in the Philippines. While the number of organizations run by youth for youth has increased in recent years, there are still many organizations for youth which are run by adults. The main categories of youth organizations are briefly discussed below.

### **1. Government organizations**

The Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) is a Constitution-mandated youth organization at the national and local levels that aims to promulgate resolutions to promote the development and welfare of youth, initiate programmes and activities, and coordinate with all youth organizations for development efforts that affect youth, especially at the local level. The funding for the activities undertaken by the SKs comes out of *barangay* funds/income, with ten per cent allocated to the SK.

Through the SK, young people from ages 15 to 21 years are given the opportunity to participate directly in affairs involving all levels of governance including *barangay*, municipal, city, provincial, and national levels (NYC 1997b).

Each *barangay* has a SK composed of a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer and seven other members who are elected at large by the registered Katipunan ng Kabataan. The SK are charged with such responsibilities as the promulgation of resolutions, initiation of programmes, holding of fund-raising activities, submission of reports, consultation and coordination with all youth organizations in the *barangay* and with the NYC.

The SK is involved in such activities as sports development, environmental care, waste management, leadership formation, education on child and youth rights, drug prevention and control, livelihood and entrepreneurial training and visiting local hospitals and juvenile jails. A regular quarterly meeting is conducted at the federation level by the president of the SK to monitor all the activities in the *barangays* and each one must submit a monthly report to the President of SK.

When the National Youth Commission (NYC) was established, it was charged with the responsibility of providing secretariat support to the SK as well as training to SK officers. As a result of the new link with the NYC, the SK was further strengthened.

## **2. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**

The role of NGOs is to complement the efforts of the government in addressing the problems of poverty and underdevelopment. The initial thrust of the NGOs' work during their formation in the 1950s was relief and welfare work. During the 1970s and 1980s, NGOs developed into more radical catalysts joining in the struggle against the Marcos Administration. After the Aquino government came into power in 1986, NGOs brought an influx of foreign financial support from industrialized countries for development initiatives. This paved the way for the wider participation of NGOs and people's organizations in the political, economic and social spheres at both national and local levels. During the term of President Fidel Ramos, "people's participation" as a policy framework was further institutionalized in national and local structures of governance.

The passage of the new Local Government Code provided the opportunity for NGOs to participate in local governance and to articulate their issues and concerns for consideration in decision-making.

The NGOs serving youth provide a variety of services in the areas of values formation, human resources development and capability building, sports, education and culture development, community building and leadership formation. The National Youth Commission (NYC) has established an accreditation mechanism whereby NGOs involved in youth development register with the NYC. Some of the main types of youth organizations are briefly outlined below.



**(a) Rural based groups**

The Federation of PAGASA (Hope) Youth Associations is found in various local communities in the country. The movement has generated youth leaders indigenous to their communities. These leaders assume management and monitoring tasks within their groups and extend assistance to other youth. The areas in which they conduct activity include education, motivation, health and nutrition, population awareness and responsible parenthood, prevention of substance abuse, sanitation and the organization or initiation of economic projects, recreation and sports, spiritual, social and cultural activities.

The major strategy used for this programme is the development of a peer support system. The key programme components and interventions are economic productivity, personality enhancement, positive lifestyle promotion, leadership training and social responsibility enrichment.

**(b) Campus political organizations**

In schools, student council organizations, although basically concerned with the welfare of the students, also serve as a facility through which youth, particularly the students, express their views on national concerns. The issues they raise range from domestic concerns, such as the campaign to lower tuition fees, to more sensitive political dialogues.

Several student unions and federations were organized in order to unite student organizations from various colleges and universities. The more popular and active campus political movements are the League of Filipino Students (LFS), the Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP) and the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP).

**(c) Religion and/or ethnicity-based organizations**

Several national youth organizations are founded on a religious basis. These include the Catholic Youth Organization in the Philippines Inc and Christ in Action. The Muslim Youth and Students Alliance (MYSA) is a national organization run by youth for youth that represents Muslim youth on socio-political issues.

**(d) Organizations for in-school youth**

In-school youth programmes are run by such organizations as the Alpha Phi Omega, the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, Rotaract, Save the Children Foundation (USA) and the School Programme Volunteer.

**(e) Organizations for out-of-school youth**

Out-of-school youth are served by such organizations as the Federation of PAG-ASA Youth Foundation, Congressional Youth Organization.

**(f) Organizations for working youth**

Organizations established to assist working youth include those such as Education for Free Workers, which is a labour-oriented organization, as well as professional organizations for youth such as the Association of Civil Engineering Students and Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants.

**(g) Organizations for youth with special needs**

There are several youth organizations that were formed to undertake advocacy and deliver programmes for Filipino youth with special needs. One example is the Philippine Action for Youth Offenders and another is the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Society.

**E. THE MEDIA**

**1. Freedom of the press and government policy on freedom of information**

The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines contains provisions with regard to freedom of information. Article III, Section 4 under the Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution provides that “No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of people peaceable to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievance”. This provision is patterned after the First Amendment of the United States of America.

Under the Bill of Rights, Section 7, it is also stated that:

*the rights of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, to documents, and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions, as well as to government research data used as a basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as maybe provided by law.*





Section 24 of the Bill of Rights provides that “the State recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation building”. Article II, Section 24 of the Philippine Constitution (Declaration of Principles and State Policies) says that the state recognizes the role of communication and information on matters of public concern. Article XVI, Section 10 also embodies the state policy for the development of Filipinos’ capability and structures that will ensure a balanced flow of information.

The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (1987-1992) also provides for the promotion of a free flow of information and responsible media, the effective use of development communication and professionalization of the government information service.

The Philippine Information Agency (PIA) was established as a result of Executive Order No. 100. It is mandated with the responsibility of communicating with the Filipino people. In turn, via the PIA, the people are to vigorously express their opinions, views and beliefs, to the President, to bring about an efficient flow of public information to assist decision-making.

Various forms of media are available to Filipino youth. Those most commonly available are newsletters, newspapers, magazines, books, television, and radio.

Several radio and television programmes are supervised by the youth themselves. Examples of these are the News Watch Junior Edition, *Sine Eskuwela* and *Batibot*.

## **F. CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION**

The legal framework and institutional mechanisms for youth participation have been greatly improved in the years following the People Power revolution in 1986. The two main relevant pieces of legislation are the Local Government Code of 1991, which created the *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK), and the Youth In Nation Building Act of 1995, which created the National Youth Commission (NYC).

The National Youth Commission (NYC) is now charged with the responsibility of developing a comprehensive, coordinated nationwide service aimed at improving youth participation in all aspects of Filipino society. The creation of the SK and the NYC, as well as the subsequent convening of two National Youth Parliaments (NYP) have increased the opportunities available to youth in the Philippines to influence decision making.



While the policy framework has been put in place, there are still many difficulties with the implementation of this policy. There continues to be difficulty with coordination between government agencies and NGOs. As many services affecting youth have been devolved to the local level, there are no regional bodies in place that are able to coordinate youth projects at the regional and local level. The current role of the SK is not maximized and there is insufficient budgetary support for youth programmes and projects.

There still remains a relatively low level of youth participation in community and political activities. As such, there is a need for ongoing awareness raising and education for all youth to increase their participation and involvement in local governance and youth development projects. There is a need for further strengthening of the SK as well as improved linkages between the SK and the NYC. Training of elected SK officers focused on leadership, community management and capability building is also required, as is a further increase in the number of youth organizations that are run by youth themselves.

Involvement of youth in all spheres of public participation is important to the process of democratization underway in the Philippines. It is also important for the development of youth as one of the major sectors of the population.

# Future Directions for Youth Development VI

## A. CONCLUSION

The creation of the National Youth Commission (NYC) was an important step in the process of ensuring that the concerns of youth are fully reflected in national policy making of the Philippines. It was also important for the formulation of integrated, cross-sectoral youth policies.

Devolution of many social services, under the strategy of local autonomy, presents many challenges to government agencies and NGOs delivering programmes for youth. Devolution issues need to be acknowledged in youth policy and plans. Formulation of formal and informal consultative mechanisms between the National Youth Commission, GOs and NGOs, also need to be recognized in national policy and they need to bear in mind the issue of devolution.

This monograph has identified four major areas of concern for youth: education; health; employment; and participation.

In the area of education, the promulgation of the Constitution of 1987 enshrined high priority to education; however, many educational issues still require further strengthening in order to see this high level commitment to education translate into real educational benefits for the youth sector.

In 1989, the President proclaimed 1990 to 1999 as the “Decade of Education for All”. In 1991 the government released the Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All (PPA). Despite these initiatives, there is still unequal access and equity in educational opportunities. Some Filipino youth, particularly rural youth, do not have access to basic education. While basic literacy rates are relatively high, functional literacy rates remain considerably lower. Drop out and cohort survival rates have improved very little in comparison to national targets. Variation among geographic regions is also considerable, with regions such as the National Capital Region (NCR) frequently registering much higher results than such regions as the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The Medium-Term Youth Development Plan 1999-2004 (MTYDP) identified an insufficient budget allocation and need for increased internal efficiency of the education budget among the major challenges for education policy makers. In summary, there is still a need for further strengthening of educational curricula in combination with higher budgetary allocation to improve the access to and quality of education in the Philippines.

In the health sector, young Filipinos lack information on important health concerns, including sexual and reproductive health and substance abuse. They also lack access to appropriate services that are “youth friendly”. In particular, the provision of family planning services is limited to those who are married. This poses a serious problem for youth health, and in particular the health of unmarried female youth.

Reproductive health is an area of major concern to youth policy makers. Despite all of the alarming statistics available, there remain very few services available that provide youth with reproductive health services.

As youth are often involved in high-risk activity, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, affect both youth men and young women. Substance abuse is also another serious health issue for youth.

While the Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan 1999-2004 (PMTDP) covers health as one of the social development areas, the corresponding Medium-Term Youth Development Plan 1999-2004 (MTYDP) pays very little attention to youth health issues. The MTYDP is strongly focussed on education policy issues and, to a lesser extent, on employment. The health



behaviour of youth has the potential to seriously affect their future health, with adult health problems arising from behaviour adopted during adolescence.

Health personnel in the Philippines are unevenly distributed, with most located in urban areas. Many health services are privately owned and are often not affordable to youth. In summary, there is heavy budget spending on curative care and not enough nor effectively spent on preventative health care in the Philippines. There is a need to re-direct funds towards the promotion of good health and preventative health care initiatives, specifically those targeted at youth.

Wherever possible, health programmes should be youth-specific and should build upon youth channels of communication, to increase participation and involvement of youth in the area of their own health issues.

In employment, young workers in the Philippines have experienced discrimination in terms of lower incomes, poor access to social security, inadequate information about workers' rights and hazardous working conditions. While the government has made considerable efforts to reduce child labour in the Philippines, it remains a problem.

Job creation is too slow to absorb the number of young workers who enter the labour market each year, so there is a need to improve the education, livelihood opportunities and other social services for Filipino youth.

There are very few agricultural training programmes, despite the large number of unemployed youth originating from rural areas. There is a need for training courses in agricultural skills and entrepreneurship to stimulate job creation, to promote the status of agricultural careers among rural youth and to stem migration. International employment migration is also prevalent among Filipino youth, with an increasing proportion of emigrants being young females.

There is great pressure placed on the domestic labour market to absorb new entrants each year. There is therefore a need to improve the balance between supply and demand of labour. Improved labour market information, more relevant education and skills development and enforcement of labour protection codes are necessary to protect and enhance the contribution of youth to the Philippine economy.

Youth have always played an important role in community and civic life in the Philippines. Despite the formal policy framework put in place, participation of youth in community and political activities remains low. Creation of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) and the National Youth Commission (NYC) established two mechanisms to increase the participation of youth in civic affairs. Nonetheless, youth organizations continue to be plagued by the complexities of dealing with government and non-governmental organizations. The potential of youth involvement has not yet been fully realized and requires further strengthening.

## **B. POLICY GUIDELINES: A SUMMARY**

The *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond* recommended that governments formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns.

A national youth policy is a mandating document for the development of specific programmes and plans for meeting the needs and aspirations of youth. It is a statement of society's commitment to youth. As such, the entire policy process must reflect the needs of young people. The only way to ensure this is to involve youth at every stage of the youth policy formulation and action plan implementation processes. In the Philippines, such a commitment has been clearly made in the Constitution of 1987.

Policy-making is not a one-time exercise; thus it is necessary for a policy process to be put in place and goals and objectives set. The process begins with a review of existing policies, programmes and projects that directly or indirectly affect the lives of youth. This analysis should take into consideration the many government agencies dealing with youth to assess if duplication or redundancy exists. A detailed action plan for the implementation of the objectives of the youth policy should follow.

The policy process consists of several other elements, such as problem and resource identification, resource mobilization and programme/project coordination. Problem identification, which includes needs identification, helps ensure that the action plan has realistic goals and objectives. Correct knowledge of the situation is crucial for determining and ranking the concerns that must be addressed.



Developing realistic action plans means taking into account the availability and limitations of resources. Financial resources are crucial, but other resources, such as administrative capability, motivational commitment of various actors, and capacity for the management of social, cultural, political and environmental factors must also be built into the plans. When the plans are realistic, the progress of their implementation can be properly monitored.

One of the crucial elements for the formulation and implementation of youth policy and action plans is coordination. An effective policy and its efficient implementation call for coordination within the various levels of a single ministry, and between ministries, departments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. This is best accomplished through an effective national coordinating mechanism.

Once the youth policy has been formulated, and accompanying action plans and coordinating mechanisms set, the focus must be on implementation. Appropriate, relevant, and targeted programmes and projects are the key to successful realization of the policy's goals and objectives. Major bottlenecks in implementation often arise from inadequate cooperation between line ministries and their departments on the one hand, and the key resource ministries, such as planning and finance, on the other. It is thus crucial that the agency in overall charge of youth affairs be given the authority to oversee the implementation of youth activities, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure effective programmes and projects.

Full implementation of an action plan, derived from the goals and objectives delineated in the youth policy will depend critically on building adequate human resource capability for efficient management at every level. Full understanding of the intended objectives and impact of the youth policy, by those implementing the programmes, is also a major prerequisite. Another important element of success is the flexibility of plans, programmes and personnel to meet the challenges presented by rapidly changing contexts. Monitoring of the implementation of youth programmes, both government and non-governmental, is thus required on a continual basis. Sufficient resources must be set aside for the monitoring and evaluation processes.

The National Youth Commission (NYC) can perform these many functions only if it has the adequate resources, both financial and human. Effective coordination among the many actors involved in youth policy formulation and programme/project implementation, through regular monitoring of activities, will require sufficient devolution of authority to the National Youth Commission. In turn, the Commission must use such resources prudently through a systematic analysis of the current situation and changing needs. It must provide a realistic assessment of existing, available and potential resources and generate new viable options, so as to remove bottlenecks and accelerate implementation. It must be able to help agencies harmonize diverse activities by pointing to the overlaps, duplications and redundancies in the programmes.

A crucial task for the National Youth Commission will be to ensure that agencies and ministries do not treat youth-specific programmes as just an 'add on' to their other priority programmes. To ensure such mainstreaming of youth-specific programmes, the Commission should make inputs into the formulation and implementation of policies and plans of various departments and agencies for such related areas as gender equality, poverty alleviation, or securing the rights of young people in need of special protection. In this way, competition for resources can be turned into cooperation, such that the quality of outcomes is enhanced for all concerned.

As the coordinating mechanism, the National Youth Commission will be called upon to ensure that an appropriate balance between central coordination, local priority-setting and decentralized implementation is maintained. The Commission has several other functions, such as advocacy, ensuring coverage, managing decentralization, identifying lead agencies, resource mobilization and enhancing legitimacy and support for plans and programmes. These are discussed in detail in the original policy guidelines (Lele, Wright and Kobayashi, forthcoming).

The creation of the National Youth Commission was an important step in the process of ensuring that the concerns of youth are fully reflected in the national policy making of the Philippines. It was also important for the formulation of integrated, cross-sectoral youth policies. Because devolution of social services, under the strategy of local autonomy, presents many challenges to government agencies and NGOs delivering programmes for youth, devolution issues need to be acknowledged in youth policy and plans.





Formulation of formal and informal consultative mechanisms between the National Youth Commission, government organizations and NGOs, also need to be recognized in national policy and they need to bear in mind the issue of devolution.

The recommendations about the policy process, discussed above, constitute some general but central considerations for successful implementation. Specific recommendations arising from those principles are outlined below.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. National youth policy**

#### ***(a) Recommendation***

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should evaluate progress on achievement of strategies identified as priorities in the Philippine Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP), 1999-2004.

#### ***Justification***

Substantial progress has been made in the area of youth policy formulation in the Philippines. Since the NYC was established, two national studies on the situation of youth in the Philippines have been undertaken in 1997 and 1998. This research contributed greatly to the youth policy formulation process that led to the formulation of the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan, 1999 to 2004.

While the current policy documents outline strategies, there are no target indicators to evaluate progress. The strategies and objectives outlined in the plan are primarily qualitative in nature. They are therefore lacking time-bound, measurable goals and indicators to enable evaluation of progress on youth development across the six-year period of the plan.

#### ***Implementation***

The National Youth Commission should coordinate with relevant government agencies including the National Statistical Office, to gather baseline data on all aspects of youth development and match these against the strategies identified in the MTYDP.

The National Youth Commission should conduct a mid-way evaluation of progress against the baseline data.

**(b) Recommendation**

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should strengthen its mechanisms to obtain input from the local level in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of youth development strategies. It should further encourage local government units to take up youth concerns in their local policies and plans.

*Justification*

A lack of coordination exists at the local level between the NYC, government agencies and NGOs. The Local Government Act of 1991 devolved many services to the local level, but the National Youth Commission (NYC) centrally coordinates youth policy and programmes. There is no formal consultative mechanism in place at the provincial and *barangay* levels whereby the NYC can liaise with GOs and NGOs to identify issues of concern to youth at the local level.

Devolution of social service functions was decreed under the Local Government Act of 1991, yet mechanisms for implementation of devolved programmes have not been properly developed and there is a lack of adequately trained local personnel who are able to provide youth-specific services. Devolution issues also need to be taken into account when youth policy and implementation plans are formulated.

*Implementation*

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should work together with local government units, NGOs and GOs, so that a provincial level network of advisory bodies on youth issues is established at the local level, and so that youth issues are mainstreamed into local government policies.

**(c) Recommendation**

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should strengthen its coordination role of GOs and NGOs working on youth issues.



### *Justification*

Youth issues cut across many policy and programme areas. However, there is a lack of coordination between various GOs, and also between GOs and NGOs working on youth issues.

While the NYC has established a register of organizations involved in youth development, there is a need to increase information-sharing and liaison among agencies to maximize benefits through partnerships and the avoidance of duplication of efforts. Clear links between areas such as education and employment and education and health have been established. Innovative programmes with a multidimensional approach have the potential to greatly benefit youth. Such programmes can only be developed if coordination mechanisms between organizations are strengthened.

### *Implementation*

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should continue its efforts to coordinate among various agencies working on youth issues. The participating ministries and NGOs should adopt the political will to work together.

## **2. Education**

### **(a) Recommendation**

There is a need to further improve access to secondary education, particularly youth in rural areas.

### *Justification*

Despite the provision of free secondary education in 1998 with the promulgation of Republic Act 6655, many Filipino youth, particularly those living in remote areas, do not have access to secondary education. The proportion of public secondary schools has increased since the promulgation of the Act. However, secondary enrolment remains heavily concentrated in three urbanized regions of the country.

The growth in secondary enrolments has not been matched with a proportional increase in the number of secondary schools. This may call for the building of additional educational facilities. More innovative strategies aimed at assisting traditionally disadvantaged students to continue their education are also required.

*Implementation*

The Department of Education, Health and Sports (DECS) should conduct an assessment of how to best improve access to secondary education.

**(b) Recommendation**

The higher education system should place greater emphasis on the needs of the labour market in order to increase the future employment opportunities for graduates.

*Justification*

A mismatch exists between the higher education courses students are graduating in and the skills demand by the labour market. Although enrolment levels are relatively high, there needs to be greater coordination between the education and employment sectors to ensure that graduates are provided with the education and skills required by employers. Another area of concern is the quality of tertiary education, as many tertiary students do not pass their professional membership examinations at graduation. The education they are receiving therefore does not meet the local and/or international industry standards.

*Implementation*

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) should work more closely with industry groups to improve the labour market information used for higher education planning.

**(c) Recommendation**

There is a need to strengthen skills training to ensure that sub-sectors of the youth population such as young women, indigenous youth and young farmers do not continue to be excluded from vocational training.



*Justification*

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) was established in 1994 with the aim of strengthening private participation in higher education, but vocational education remains largely in traditionally male-dominated apprenticeship courses.

Tertiary institutions remain largely privately owned; they often have high tuition fees and are highly concentrated in urban locations. These factors present considerable barriers to traditionally disadvantaged groups, in particular, rural youth.

*Implementation*

The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) should provide opportunities to youth who have had limited access to higher education.

**(d) Recommendation**

There is a need to encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems among out-of-school youth.

*Justification*

Many Filipino youth are neither working nor enrolled in formal education and they have no plans to return to the formal education sector. There is a need to encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, to increase access to quality non-formal education for youth in the Philippines.

*Implementation*

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) should provide opportunities for youth who have limited access to formal education, to increase their participation in quality, non-formal education.

**3. Health**

**(a) Recommendation**

There is a need for the creation of “youth friendly” health services, with particular attention to information and prevention programmes with special attention to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and to substance abuse.

### *Justification*

Youth health data indicate that health issues for Filipino youth differ substantially from those of other age groups. The leading causes of mortality among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years were accidents and injuries, at a rate almost four times higher than the next leading cause, pneumonia. Youth are particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases. A survey in 1994 found that 24.4 per cent of females and 24.3 per cent of males surveyed had at least one serious reproductive health problem.

### *Implementation*

The Department of Health (DOH) and the private sector should work together to provide high quality health services meeting the health needs of youth throughout the country.

#### **(b) Recommendation**

There is a need for targeted health programmes specifically aimed at improving female reproductive health.

### *Justification*

Female youth have been found to have the largest unmet health needs of all sectors of the population. Despite data underscoring the reproductive health needs of youth, current policy continues to exclude adolescents and unmarried couples from family planning services.

The maternal death rate among women aged 15 to 24 years was 21 per cent, with three out of every four maternal deaths occurring among teenager mothers. The proportion of teenagers who underwent induced abortions was higher than the rate for those who had normal deliveries. High levels of early marriage, the young average age of females at the birth of their first child, and the high incidence of illegitimate births among female youth are all additional health statistics of major concern.

### *Implementation*

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should lobby the government to extend family planning services to all, and recognize the reproductive health needs of youth, many of which who are not yet married. The Department



of Health (DOH) and NGOs should work together to provide high quality health services to youth, in particular, reproductive health services to female youth.

***(c) Recommendation***

Confidential, affordable, youth-friendly HIV/AIDS testing and counselling services that are accessible to all youth need to be established in all regions of the country.

*Justification*

Youth are often involved in high-risk activities, making them particularly vulnerable to contracting diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Thirty-three per cent of those who reportedly tested positive for HIV/AIDS fell within the age bracket of 15 to 24 years. At the same time, there is a major shortage of facilities to which youth can turn to undergo testing and receive advice and counseling services.

*Implementation*

The Department of Health (DOH) and the private sector should work together to establish a network of confidential, affordable, youth-friendly HIV/AIDS testing and counseling services nationwide.

***(d) Recommendation***

An integrated national youth health policy should be developed to address all major health issues, including sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases, substance abuse, nutrition and hygiene, sexual abuse and exploitation, mental health and occupational health. The youth health policy should take into account the different health needs of male and female youth.

*Justification*

The Philippine Medium-Term Youth Development Plan, 1999-2004 does not adequately address health policy issues for youth. The Department of Health (DOH) has identified adolescents and youth as a policy sub-sector, but there is insufficient coordination between the DOH and the NYC to address youth-specific health issues.

The health status objective of reducing the mortality rate among adolescents and youth has been identified in the National Objectives for Health policy document, but there is a lack of youth-specific data on access to health services.

*Implementation*

Formulation of this health policy requires the active participation of youth, youth-related organizations, government agencies and NGOs. In particular, it requires close coordination between the NYC and the Department of Health (DOH) to ensure that the special health issues of youth are recognized.

**(e) Recommendation**

Youth health concerns should be incorporated into the National Youth Commission (NYC) policy documents.

*Justification*

The Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP), 1999-2004 currently does not adequately address youth health policy issues.

*Implementation*

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should work closely with the Department of Health (DOH) to incorporate youth health issues into the overall NYC national youth policy.

**(f) Recommendation**

Greater awareness needs to be raised on the issue of substance abuse among youth, and mechanisms such as substance abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation centres need to be put in place to decrease the problem.

*Justification*

Research suggests that there is a large incidence of smoking, drinking and drug abuse among Filipino youth. More than half the youth surveyed in a national study reported having drunk alcohol, and in 1999 40.5 per cent of young males smoked. Statistics on the number of drug dependants





from 1983 to 1992 indicate that drug abuse is the most prevalent in the 15 to 24 year age group. Sixty-eight per cent of all Filipinos admitted to drug rehabilitation centres belonged to the 15 to 34 year age bracket. However, very few treatment services are reported to provide services that are sensitive to the issues associated with substance abuse among youth.

The National Objectives for Health identify the need for the establishment and operation of a substance abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation centre in each region. It also identifies the need for the establishment of substance abuse prevention information desks in colleges and universities, and the incorporation of health education into school curricula.

#### *Implementation*

The Department of Health (DOH) and the private sector should work together to establish a network of confidential, affordable, youth-friendly substance abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation centres in each region. All relevant government departments and agencies responsible for education should also work together with the National Youth Commission to establish substance abuse prevention desks in all higher education institutions and to incorporate health education into school curriculum.

#### **(g) Recommendation**

Local health care workers should be trained and sensitized to better understand youth health issues.

#### *Justification*

Devolution of many of the health services to the local government level has meant that local personnel with new work responsibilities have not always received adequate training in the special needs of youth.

#### *Implementation*

The Department of Health (DOH) needs to work closely with regional health units (RHUs) and *barangay* health stations (BHSs) to improve the level of training for local health workers in the area of youth health.

## **4. Employment**

### **(a) Recommendation**

There is a need for the development of training and employment initiatives that lead to long term jobs for Filipino youth, particularly for those groups traditionally disadvantaged in the labour market.

#### *Justification*

A plethora of training and employment programmes is currently managed by numerous government agencies, of which many involve paid vacation work in government departments. There appears, however, to be very few employment programmes that lead to the creation of long-term jobs. There is minimal benefit for youth to undertake vocational work while studying, if this will not improve their chance of employment at completion of their studies. It merely provides a continuous flow of low cost labour for the participating government agencies that may, in fact, reduce the recruitment of permanent, entry-level staff.

There continues to be a gap between male and female participation rates and average wage rates, with female youth maintaining their disadvantaged position in the labour market. Young women workers, even those with more education, continue to earn less than their male counterparts.

#### *Implementation*

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) needs to coordinate an evaluation of all the existing employment programmes in order to determine the real level of job creation resulting from government employment programmes.

### **(b) Recommendation**

Integrated youth training and employment programme should be established, including initiatives targeting traditionally disadvantaged groups, such as women, disabled, youth, out-of-school youth, rural youth and indigenous youth.



*Justification*

See (a) above.

*Implementation*

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in close coordination with the National Youth Commission (NYC), should amalgamate all elements of different labour market programmes which have youth elements into one integrated, youth-specific, training and employment programme. Funds should be allocated to the programme for implementation at the local level. Statistics should be kept, criteria for success developed, and programmes evaluated on those criteria.

**(c) Recommendation**

Training courses in agricultural skills and entrepreneurship should be implemented to stimulate job creation, to promote the status of agricultural careers to rural youth, and to stem rural to urban migration among youth.

*Justification*

More than 40 per cent of youth are engaged in agricultural work. However, this work is usually of low skill, status and pay. There are very few agricultural training programmes, despite the large number of unemployed youth originating from rural areas. Rural to urban migration is prevalent among rural youth, often related to the search for better job opportunities.

*Implementation*

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Youth Commission (NYC) should work closely together to ensure that rural youth benefit from training and employment initiatives.

**(d) Recommendation**

The national government should continue to provide support and assistance to those youth who seek employment outside of the Philippines.

*Justification*

International labour migration is prevalent in the Philippines and many of the emigrants are youth. While work outside the country provides new job opportunities for many, there have been frequent reports of sexual and physical abuse, maltreatment and even murder, particularly of Filipino young women at the hands of foreign employers.

*Implementation*

The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) should continue to work closely with agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and host countries to protect the interests of their nationals.

**(e) Recommendation**

The enforcement of labour standards is required to protect youth workers from abuse and exploitation.

*Justification*

Young workers are frequently not afforded protection by minimum wage provisions and other labour protection codes, especially rural youth and young women.

*Implementation*

The Department of Labour and Employment should continue its efforts to improve the working conditions of young workers in the Philippines via enforcement of the labour standards.

**5. Participation**

**(a) Recommendation**

A mechanism should be put in place to facilitate cross-sectoral liaison with relevant government agencies and NGOs at the local level.

*Justification*

Awareness raising for the youth population as well as capacity-building training in the areas of monitoring and evaluation skills are needed for NYB staff and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) representatives so



that they can effectively achieve the youth development objectives outlined in the Philippine Medium-Term Youth Development Plan, 1999-2004.

*Implementation*

The SK network is already in place, and the National Youth Commission should utilise this structure to conduct awareness raising campaigns and to provide training to SK representatives in order to increase youth participation in the Philippines.

**(b) Recommendation**

Youth data should be collected in the area of voting and other forms of political participation. This data should be disaggregated by sex and by region.

*Justification*

While some data have been collected on Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) participation, no data exist in the area of participation in formal, non-youth politics.

*Implementation*

The National Youth Commission (NYC) should coordinate with the national agency responsible for electoral issues to collect specific youth data on voting and political participation.

**(c) Recommendation**

There is a need to increase political awareness and involvement among youth, particularly those youth from indigenous and other traditionally disadvantaged groups.

*Justification*

While the establishment of the National Youth Commission, National Youth Parliament and Sangguniang Kabataan are encouraging, there also remains a need for more informal, non-government channels for youth to participate in the community.



*Implementation*

There is a need for greater support for participation of youth in the media. There is also a need for improved coordination between GOs and NGOs who serve youth, particularly in view of devolution of services to the local level.

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