

APFSD YOUTH FORUM 2023



Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2023



Philippines

Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific with Young People at the Forefront

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

SDG3: Health and Well-being

- 40 to 50 adolescent pregnancies among 10 to 14 years old per week during the pandemic according to the Philippine Commission on Population.¹
- Poor women, rural, and young women are particularly likely to experience unintended pregnancy and to seek abortion under unsafe conditions. 1,261,500 estimated number of induced abortions.²
- There is also an issue of insufficient resource allocation for sexual and reproductive health in the country. The budget for the implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law substantially decreased by three-fold in the past decade. The Department of Health proposed 2023 budget for reproductive health covering 3 million women would only amount to Php 287.00 (approximately USD 5.00) per woman of reproductive age.
- COVID-19 Contact Tracing App - The Philippine government developed a contact tracing app called StaySafe.ph to help identify and isolate individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19. The app uses Bluetooth technology to track close contacts of COVID-19 positive patients and provides information on testing and quarantine protocols.
- Vaccine Rollout Program - The Philippine government launched a nationwide free vaccine rollout program to vaccinate the population against COVID-19. The programme prioritises healthcare workers, elderly individuals, and those with comorbidities.

Sources:

¹ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1116071>.

² University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI).

SDG5: Gender Equality

- In School Year 2022-2023, several School-Related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV) incidents including transgender girls being asked to cut their hair and being mandated to wear a uniform for male students were reported. Hence, the Department of Education reiterated the “strict implementation of and compliance” with DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 or the “Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy” in all elementary and high schools nationwide. It seeks to enable DepEd to undertake gender-mainstreaming in education.
- The Philippines’ efforts to overcome inequality are guided by its Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Plan from 2019 to 2025. It was developed by the Philippine Commission on Women, the plan provides special emphasis on addressing GBV through intensified campaigns. One strategy under this plan is to accelerate the access of women from the marginalised sector to education and training.
- All agencies and LGUs are mandated by law to allot at least 5% of their total budget for gender and development programmes which may include gender-sensitivity training, women’s health centres, among others.
- Residential and non-residential care facilities for vulnerable and disadvantaged women provide opportunities for continuing education through formal or non-formal education. Skills training and livelihood activities are conducted in cooperation with DepEd and NGOs.
- DepEd launched the 2022–2030 Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP). The BEDP anchors on the Sulong Edukalidad Framework, the Philippine Development Plan and Ambisyon 2040, and the commitments in the SDG 2030. One of the strategies in BEDP is to “Provide an inclusive, effective, culturally responsive, gender-sensitive, and safe learning environment to respond to the situations of disadvantage”. Another strategy is to “Improve gender-sensitive contextualised curriculum and learning delivery”.
- Gradual shift to on-site classes opened opportunity to discuss gender-neutral uniform policy and lived names

SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- Rapid urbanisation affects the distribution of adequate water and sanitation services.³
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) Program to educate children on sanitation and proper hygiene.
- Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program - This program aims to restore the water quality and ecosystem of Manila Bay, which has been heavily polluted for decades. It includes the relocation of informal settlers, the cleanup of garbage and pollutants, and the rehabilitation of mangrove forests and other coastal ecosystems.
- Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan - This plan aims to provide universal access to safe water and sanitation services in the Philippines by 2028. It includes the development of new water supply systems, expansion of existing ones, and the promotion of water conservation and demand management practices.

SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- The Philippines has opened full ownerships to foreign investors on energy mix diversification and renewable energy.
- National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) - This programme aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the country’s energy mix to 35% by 2030. It includes the development of renewable energy projects, the promotion of energy efficiency and conservation, and the creation of a sustainable energy market.
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EE&C) Program - This programme promotes the efficient use of energy in households, businesses, and industries. It includes the adoption of energy-efficient technologies and practices, the implementation of energy management systems, and the conduct of energy audits.

Source:

³ <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/two-billion-people-lack-safe-drinking-water-more-twice-lack-safe-sanitation>.

SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- Establishment of additional healthcare facilities and education facilities and integrating local shelter planning.
- Build, Build, Build Program - This infrastructure development programme aims to accelerate the implementation of high-impact projects, such as transportation, water supply, and energy projects, to improve connectivity, mobility, and access to basic services. The programme continued during the pandemic to create jobs and support the economy.
- Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program - This programme aims to promote rural development and decongest urban areas by encouraging people to return to their provinces. It includes the provision of livelihood opportunities, access to basic services, and the development of rural infrastructure.
- E-Commerce and Digital Economy - The Philippine government has been promoting the e-commerce and digital economy as part of its COVID-19 recovery plan. This includes the development of policies and programs to support digital entrepreneurship, online business registration, and the adoption of digital payment systems.

SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Focusing on building urban parks/areas of recreation as part of post-pandemic recovery, relevant on LGU's role in highlighting sustainable urban planning and development
- Bayanihan to Heal as One Act - This law provides the Philippine government with the necessary powers to implement emergency measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes provisions for the establishment of temporary medical facilities, the provision of social amelioration programs, and the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of the virus.
- COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program - This programme provides housing assistance to informal settlers, particularly those affected by the pandemic. It includes the provision of temporary shelters, rental subsidies, and housing loans for low-income families.

SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 - This is the country's development blueprint that aims to achieve inclusive growth and poverty reduction through strategic partnerships with various stakeholders and further strengthening Public-Private Partnerships through 2023-2028 Philippine Development Plan.
- Provision of vaccines from countries through bilateral and multilateral relations.
- The Philippines submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions commitments to UNFCCC in 2021, which is supported by NCCAP priority areas.
- COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund - The Philippines, together with other member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has established the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. The fund supports the implementation of measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the areas of health, social protection, and economic recovery.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We urge Member-States, particularly the Government of the Philippines, to take the following actions:

SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Advocate for National Policy in Preventing Adolescent Pregnancies, Institutionalizing Social Protection for Adolescent Parents, and Providing Funds for women and girls.
- Lobby and advocate for the passage of Anti-Discrimination on the Basis of SOGIE Bill, Civil Union Bill, and Intersex Recognition Bill.
- Advocate for the recognition of life-saving Trans* Healthcare services in the Philippines.
- Ensure the full implementation and strengthen the quality of CSE in the Philippines. Teachers and Curriculum should be gender responsive and sensitive.
- Implement strong advocacy programmes in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS cases through awareness campaigns, sharing stories and free HIV testing, especially on municipal levels, and schools.
- Amend the RPRH law for minors to be able to access contraceptives (including emergency contraception) without the need for parental consent.

- Encourage Dialogue in Achieving a More inclusive Child Rights Framework and conduct regular discussions with organisations, various groups and sectors, and the LGBTQIA+ community to continually improve our laws and policies to be more inclusive to diverse SOGIESC.
- Provide counselling for victims of SOGIESC-based violence, harassment, discrimination or other abuses.
- Establish fast and reliable reporting mechanisms for SOGIESC-based violence, discrimination, and abuse.
- Ensure access to infrastructure and facilities for students with diverse SOGIESC such as the access to safe toilets.
- Implement different programmes catered to parents and guardians that would guide them on how to help adolescents make responsible and informed decisions about their sexuality.
- Implement gender responsive approaches to sustainable development which includes access to comprehensive sexuality education to ensure young people's health and wellbeing.
- In collaboration with private sectors, the government should emphasise the need to fund innovative technologies and cost-effective solutions to address water scarcity, wastewater treatment, filtration, and purification, alongside additional infrastructure projects. In September 2021, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) launched the Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan (PSWSSMP). This plan is a welcome development and a manifestation of the government's priority actions to provide safe and sustainable WASH to the Filipino people. The government must be able to accelerate its progress to achieve the SDG targets, including the setting up of national and local targets for WASH. Accordingly, this must be financed as a contribution toward achieving the SDG2030 targets on clean water, sanitation and hygiene.

SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- The need to address the various issues impeding the efficient delivery of water supply and sanitation (WSS) services in the Philippines remains an unavoidable reality. Among the recommended countermeasures to address the concerns are the formation of an apex body to manage WSS projects, the establishment of water testing laboratories capable of conducting an updated and comprehensive study of water quantity and the quality of all water resources for drinking, agriculture and industrial, and prioritising basic sanitation in schools and households in rural areas as an early step toward improving sanitation. It can be achieved by constructing septage treatment facilities in appropriate locations and passing sanitation ordinances in relation to the environmental code.

SDG7: Affordable and Clean Wnergy

- Ensure meaningful youth participation in green jobs related to clean and renewable energy, as the Philippines shifts to mixed energy sources by 2030 and beyond.
- Strengthen renewable energy education across various academic levels and awareness to communities to highlight consumer welfare on the aspect of electrification.

SDG9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

- Develop infrastructure that caters to the youth such as Youth Centers while having Youth as the Counsellors/ Head of the aforementioned centre. Selected youth leaders who have the interest, willingness, and capacity to serve as peer counsellors, educators, and advocates for a positive way of life, environment, and understanding of the rights of children are trained to support the service providers. This is done in consideration of the credibility and influence of their peers in the lives of the youth.
- Establish health care facilities such as treatment hubs at the municipal level while having selected youth leaders to be the peer counsellors.

SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Support green and sustainable urban planning by creating diverse ecosystem parks and constructing wildlife corridors and linking green spaces, and providing eco-friendly and PWD-friendly public transportation systems.
- Boost electric vehicular campaigns, such as tax credits, through public-private partnerships to encourage consumers to switch to electric vehicles rather than fuel-powered vehicles.
- Streamline financial and technical support to local production industries to promote local trade within the economy by mandating provincial-wide investments to craftsmen, farmers, fishermen, and small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs).
- To ensure the sustainability of cities and communities, we should also prioritise in our developmental plans and policies, to ensure that they are gender-responsive and gender-inclusive, making our communities a safe space for everyone. This is one way to ensure peace and order in the community that will then bring more investors and people to our communities.

SDG13: Climate Action

- Reinforce sustainable development education that seeks to envision youth-led programmes and projects that are aimed to promote climate action in various fields of arts, humanities, and sciences.

SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships: To achieve sustainable development, partnerships between the government, civil society, the private sector, and international organisations are crucial. Efforts should be made to bring together these different stakeholders to collaborate and achieve common goals.
- Engage marginalised communities: The SDGs aim to leave no one behind, and partnerships should prioritise engaging marginalised communities, including indigenous peoples, women, and youth. Efforts should be made to ensure that their voices are heard and they have a seat at the table.
- Leverage technology and innovation: Technology and innovation can be used to facilitate partnerships and promote sustainable development. For example, digital platforms can be used to connect stakeholders and share information and best practices.
- Nothing About Us, Without Us: We must ensure that the Young Key Population are not just beneficiaries of the plans, policies, projects, and initiatives in achieving SDGs. We must ensure that historically, socially, and economically marginalised and undermined populations are in the forefront and meaningfully engaged in the decision-making process because they know the community better because they are the community.
- Enable active involvement of young scientists in climate action-related initiatives by engaging them in youth-led research forums, linkages and networks at the international, regional, and national levels.
- Strengthen more capacity-building initiatives and diverse representation for young groups with special needs, indigenous, and underprivileged in local and community training by providing financial aid and technical assistance.

The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on March 18-20, 2023. The Philippines drafting team was led by Clarence Gio Saño Almoite and Alexander Bernal with inputs provided by Danize Lukban, Daryl Betonio Padera, Izza De Guzman, Jameson Cambel, Johnlee Ligon, Kathleen Isaac, Mikaela Cañaverl Josef, and Mirus Ponon. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
