

PHILIPPINES — Country Profile

Overview

The Philippines lies strategically within the arc of nations that sweeps southeastward from mainland Asia to Australia. The country is an archipelago with over 7,100 islands, many of which are remote and referred to as GIDAs (geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas). The islands are home to over 11 million indigenous peoples belonging to over 110 ethno-linguistic groups. It is also considered a natural disaster “hotspot,” with about 50% of its total area and 81% of the population vulnerable to typhoons, floods, and earthquakes. A total of 92.3 million Filipinos are residents as of 2010. It is the 12th most populous country in the world with 98.4 million people in 2013 and growing at a rate of 1.7% per year.

Many citizens are young; 33% were 0-14 years old while 20% were 15-24, according to the 2010 census by the Philippines Statistics Authority. Urbanization is the trend, with 45.3% of the population residing in urban areas, with an annual growth rate of 4%, as compared to the 0.4% decline in rural area populations. The Philippines is a lower middle-income country with an emerging economy, as the third fastest growing economy in Asia. GDP has been increasing, although the government has struggled to reach its target for reducing poverty amongst the population.

Source: *extracted from Philippines Demographic & Health Survey (PDHS) 2017*

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Key findings from the 2017 PDHS on the situation of SRHR in Philippines are as follows:

Maternal Health:

- Fertility declined from 6.0 births per woman in 1973 to 2.7 births per woman in 2017—a drop of more than three births per woman.
- 94 percent of women who gave birth in the 5 years preceding the survey received antenatal care from a skilled provider at least once.
- Eighty-seven percent of women had four or more antenatal care visits.
- Urban women were no more likely than rural women to have received antenatal care from a skilled provider (94% each).
- 80 percent of pregnant women were protected against neonatal tetanus.
- Ninety-two percent of births to urban mothers were assisted by a skilled provider, as compared with 79 percent of births to rural mothers.
- 85 percent of births to urban mothers were delivered in a health facility, as compared with 72 percent to rural.

Contraception:

- 54 percent of currently married women use a method of family planning, with 40 percent using a modern method and 14 percent using a traditional method.
- Among currently married women, the most popular methods are the pill (used by 21%), withdrawal (used by 10%), female sterilization (used by 7%), and injectables (used by 5%).
- The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) among married women varies with age, rising from 36 percent among women age 15-19, peaking at 62 percent of women age 30-34, and then declining to 38 percent among women age 45-49.
- Among sexually active, unmarried women, 32 percent use a method and 17 percent use a modern method.
- Use of contraception is twice as high among sexually active, unmarried women in urban areas as rural areas (40% versus 21%).
- The government sector is the most popular source for modern contraception in the Philippines, serving 56 percent of modern method users.
- 71 percent of currently married women have a demand for family planning.
- Younger married women age 15-19 have the greatest value of unmet need of all age groups (28% versus 13%-18%).
- Among sexually active, unmarried women, 49 percent have an unmet need for family planning, and 32 percent have a met need; therefore 81 percent have demand for family planning.

Abortion:

Although abortion is recognised as illegal and punishable by law, the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act 2012 states that "the government shall ensure that all women needing care for post-abortion complication shall be treated and counseled in a humane, non-judgmental and compassionate manner".

HIV & AIDS:

- Six in ten women (62%) know that both using condoms and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner are means of preventing HIV.
- Only one in five young women (20%) have comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention.
- Among women who had two or more sexual partners in the 12 months prior to the survey, 9% reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse.
- 45% of women know of a place where they can get an HIV test.
- By age, young women age 15-19 are the least likely to know a place to get an HIV test (31%).
- Overall, 4% of women have ever been tested for HIV and received the results of their last test.
- 2% were tested in the past 12 months and received the results of their last test.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Child Early & Forced Marriage (CEFM):

- Overall, 9 percent of women age 15-19 have begun childbearing. 7 percent have had a live birth and 2 percent were pregnant at the time of the interview.
- Rural teenagers start childbearing slightly earlier than urban teenagers (10% and 7% respectively).

Violence Against Women (VAW):

- One in five (20%) women has ever experienced emotional violence, 14 percent has ever experienced physical violence, and 5 percent ever experienced sexual violence by their current or most recent husband or partner.
- 53 percent of divorced, separated, or widowed women have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence compared with 24 percent of women who are married or living together.
- All forms of violence generally decline with increasing household wealth.
- Women's experience with violence by a partner varies widely by region.
- Only 7 percent of ever-married women in ARMM report experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their last partner compared with 52 percent of ever-married women in Caraga.

Current initiatives in the Philippines

- ARROW works with partners like Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) in the **Claiming the right to safe abortion: Strategic partnerships in Asia project** that addresses stigma on abortion across Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal and the Philippines. The initiative focuses on capacity strengthening, accountability, and advocacy on the right to safe and legal abortion. The focus of the Philippines national level work is on building the capacity of young people to undertake abortion advocacy.
- ARROW and its partner Likhaan Center for Women's Health, Inc. (LIKHAAN) in the Philippines continue to work towards **ICPD+25: Revitalising and implementing the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region**. This ICPD+25 monitoring and advocacy initiative aims to show the progress gaps and challenges towards ICPD implementation in the Philippines. In-depth monitoring is currently underway on the dynamics and impact of adolescent pregnancy towards the development of effective strategies for adolescent contraception in the Philippines.
- ARROW is also engaged in **innovative advocacy programmes on SRHR and environmental sustainability** with rights-based climate change/environmental groups. The Women and Earth Initiative (WORTH) is an innovation programme and fund that aims to create a platform where civil society can unleash creativity and develop new integrated solutions to gender equality, SRHR and climate change adaptation challenges. For 2019, the programme is focused on climate change/environmental civil society organisations from four countries experiencing devastating consequences from climate change: Philippines, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan.