



**Office of the President of the Philippines  
NATIONAL YOUTH COMMISSION**

4th flr. Bookman Bldg., 373 Quezon Avenue,  
Quezon City PHILIPPINES

Telefax: (02) 781-2373

Tel. Nos.: 781-1406 • 781-2372 loc. 104

[www.youth.net.ph](http://www.youth.net.ph)



**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

**Youth Attributes, Participation and**

**Service-Providers (YAPS)**

**Executive Summary**

**YAPS**

## The Youth Assessment

1. The 2004 Philippine Youth Assessment was conducted to pave the way towards the crafting of the 2005-2010 Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (MTYDP) that responsively and strategically addresses the issues of the youth. The National Youth Commission (NYC) spearheaded the undertaking with the financial and technical support of the World Bank (WB).
2. The assessment was conducted through a series of data gathering processes that involved youth participants (15-30 years old), and regional and local youth serving organizations in nine regions of the country. It was facilitated through the joint efforts of a team of consultants, NYC staff members, and representatives of two youth organizations TUKLAS Katutubo (a national organization of indigenous youth) and the University of the Philippines Student Catholic Action (UPSCA).

## Highlights

3. Republic Act 8044 defines Youth as “the critical period in a person's growth and development, from the onset of adolescence towards the peak of mature, self-reliant and responsible adulthood; *comprising considerable sector of the population from the age of 15 to 30 years.*”
4. It is estimated that the total youth population has reached 23.2M in 2004. Their number constitutes 28.05% of the total Philippine population of 82.7M. The youth population is almost equally distributed between males (50.1%) and females (49.9%). The number of younger youth (15-19 years) is slightly higher than that of their older counterparts.
5. The spatial distribution of youth generally followed the national trend, that is population is concentrated within or near the metropolitan areas where there is access to services, facilities and opportunities. Youth population is highest in Luzon areas particularly in Southern Tagalog (15%), National Capital Region (14%) and Central Luzon (10%). Based on NYC projections, youth population is projected at nearly 26 million by 2010.

## Youth Disposition and Issues

6. Discussions with the youth participants indicate that, overall, the aspirations, priorities, and challenges of Filipino youth revolve around their immediate environment self and family. Broader social concerns in the community and the locality were only sporadically brought up. During such occasions, there is a trend that the older age groups (18-30) are more aware and concerned with societal issues than the younger youth groups.
7. The articulated issues of the youth center on health, education, and employment. The most articulated youth concerns are those related to sexual risk behaviors, and drug and substance abuse, which are often connected to the risk-taking behavior of the youth and to family and societal dysfunctions. Media has also been a considerable influence.
8. Access to education and the quality of education remain to be issues among school-going age groups. The problem is more acute for those who ought to be taking tertiary education, as universities and colleges are concentrated in more urbanized areas and are not affordable to the low income groups.
9. Employment is mostly a problem of the 18-24 years old who enter the labor force. There are 15-17 year old youth who are employed and are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The need to find decent work is also an issue but the youth often disregard this due to lack of employability and opportunities. Most of the overseas Filipino workers belong to the youth group and this trend has been increasing. This situation has been exacerbated by the lack of capacity of the Philippine economy to absorb the youth entering the labor force.
10. There are youth groups that possess unique opportunities and constraints and they should be mainstreamed in the youth development process. For instance, the assessment found indigenous youth participants who expressed issues related to land rights and discrimination; street youth who are dreaming of having a home; youth in conflict with the law who are concerned with protection of their rights and reintegration in society; drug dependents who raised the need for alternative hobby and spiritual guidance; exploited youth who have different psycho-emotional needs depending on the type and gravity of exploitation; and youth in situation of armed conflict who are concerned with having a peaceful environment.

## Youth Participation

11. The lack of general social consciousness is manifested by the fact that 'youth participation' has hardly been raised as an issue or a problem by the youth participants. Whether this is brought about by indifference or more by disenchantment still needs further examination.
12. It could be more of complacency. Data suggests that the youth, regardless of gender and type of settlement, are involved in and have significant influence in key activities and decisions that affect their lives at home, in school, and in the organizations they belong. The assessment indicates participation is not an issue to them even if they recognize their lack of involvement and influence in community/local affairs. The older age groups are more predisposed to talk about social issues rather than the younger age groups.
13. Collectively though, the youth as a sector have been engaged in social transformation. Organized youth groups get involved in addressing a variety of issues: student rights; human rights; graft and corruption; and change in governance, among others. Their mode of response to these issues ranges from the more conservative approaches like changing the system from within through peaceful means, to seeking to overthrow the system by joining the armed struggle. In the middle of the spectrum, there are school- and community-based initiatives of volunteer youth groups who spend their time, energies, and resources to engage in social action.

## Institutional Responses

14. When asked about who they turn to or who/what has helped them in their problems as young people, the mention of government and even non-government programs and organizations come few and far between. Most of them regardless of youth sub-sector nor gender, nor type of settlement, have relied on and turn to their family or immediate relatives and friends when they need help. The higher age group respondents related that they tend to take care of their own problems. This phenomenon indicates the limited reach of government programs/services for youth development.

15. The national government agencies have programs and services that address health, education, and employment problems of the youth. Strengthening institutional support to youth participation is an aspect that can be further enhanced. Resources for youth development interventions—financial, physical, and human—are wanting. Inter-agency coordination and complementation can be strengthened further. The potential resources and expertise that can be accessed by working with the private sector and non-government organizations are not being maximized.
16. The NYC, as the agency primarily responsible for youth development, has initiated efforts to address the above gaps/needs. Inter-agency collaboration is realized by activating the NYC Advisory Council and by facilitating the establishment of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) nationwide and attendance to RDC meetings.
17. NYC's presence has been hardly visible and felt at the local levels both by the service providers and the youth participants. This could change as NYC continues its advocacy to encourage the establishment of Local Youth Development Councils and to facilitate the formulation of Local Youth Development Plans.
18. At the local level, local government units and civil society groups declared that youth development is among the top priority of their organizations. Local service providers acknowledge that the effectiveness of their responses to youth needs/issues could still be further improved.
19. Civil society, especially the church-based groups, is significantly active in youth development efforts. Like the national government agencies, the LGUs' working relations with these groups to act on youth issues need to be enhanced and strengthened.
20. Youth participation in programs of local service providers comes during the implementation stage of programs and projects. Aside from the youth groups (i.e., SK and youth organizations), youth involvement in the more crucial stages of project/program development such as project identification and selection, project planning, and evaluation are wanting. Yet, the organizations pointed out that lack of youth participation is a critical problem in the management of their programs. On the upbeat note, local service providers are cognizant of the value of forging strong and expanding linkages with youth organizations in realizing their vision for the youth.

21. Youth participation in local policy-making and in youth development is provided for in the Local Government Code through the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). There is a need to review the SK mechanism, as the provisions of the Code have not been implemented as intended. The age group of those who are covered by the SK has been reduced from 15-21 to 15-17 years old. Elections have not been held every three years as mandated by the Code. The alleged meddling of politicians has also played a decisive part in the elections.
22. Performance of many SK leaders has been below expectations. Hence, it is not surprising to find that most of the youth assessment participants have a vague concept on the role of the SK and/or have found the SK as ineffective in pursuing youth development. Nonetheless, some young people who have been committed to and quite successful in carrying out their tasks have negated the sweeping view that SK is irrelevant.

## Planning Implications

23. The assessment points to a number of development interactions with the youth that should be sustained, enhanced, and/or explored. This summary highlights those that are related to the formulation of the next MTYDP.
24. The assessment validates the need to come up with age-responsive development interventions due to psychological and social differences that exist within sub-age groups (i.e., 15-17, 18-24, and 25-30 years old). Gender aspects also need to be considered because there are specific youth needs that are more prevalent to male youth (e.g., risk-taking behavior) and female youth (e.g., unwanted pregnancy). There are also socio-cultural factors that promote or hinder gender equity.
25. The types of settlement, whether urban or rural or rurban (communities that exhibit both urban and rural characteristics), also ought to be taken into account as differences in access to basic services and facilities, and modern technology do exist.
26. The formulation of the new MTYDP should not lump together youth with special needs in one subsector as done before because of their differences. The planning process ought to consider their differences not only with youth in general but also among each sub-sectoral group.

27. Success stories of youth voluntary community development efforts whether by youth organizations or by the SKs should be documented and studied. Lessons there from can be propagated for possible replication or to catalyze similar types of endeavors.
28. Mechanisms to invigorate youth participation can be explored further. Policy makers ought to look beyond the SK system, as the assessment reveals that the quest for meaningful youth participation transcends making the SK scheme work. Concerned and active youth groups can be challenged to come up with such alternatives.
29. The results of the institutional assessment affirm that NYC is on the right track in trying to foster inter-agency cooperation and complementation at the national and regional levels, and in trying to initiate collaboration among youth and youth-serving organizations at the local level.
30. The MTYDP can veer away from being a compilation of programs already being undertaken by the national government agencies. The new MTYDP could focus on identifying strategic, mutually reinforcing efforts in addressing the interrelated issues of the youth that government organizations and the civil society can collectively undertake.
31. The government should forge working relations with civil society groups: the church/faith-oriented organizations, the non-government and people's organizations and the business sector to fortify the support base of the youth. Ensuring the youth's active involvement in the planning process would be a sound approach in securing their participation in the plan implementation.
32. The most important stakeholders are the youth themselves. Their involvement in the assessment, though still limited, has made a difference in data gathering, processing, and analysis. Their level and quality of participation can be enhanced in the planning process.