



The Future of Filipino Children

Development Issues and Trends

Edited by Florangel Rosario-Braid, Ramon R. Tuazon,
Ann Lourdes C.Lopez

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Foreword



In our work for children, we recognize that our efforts are only as good as our ability to enable children to develop and reach their full potential.

It is because of this that we supported the Asian Institute of Journalism (AIJC) to produce the Megatrends study in 1998, which examined the prevailing issues and trends affecting children at that time and established their impact on child development decades after.

This new book *The Future of Filipino Children*, similar to its predecessor, is as invaluable not only to UNICEF but to all decision-makers in Philippine society who are influential in bringing about a nurturing environment for the children of this nation. It presents authoritative data and insights by experts on the themes covered, from their analysis of current and emerging development trends. It also helps us to create responsive programmes and policies by not only addressing persistent challenges (such as poverty, low literacy and armed conflict among others), but by directing our attention as well to issues such as gender inequality, overseas labor migration and use of information technology that may at first seem peripheral to children's lives but are shown to be highly influential. Further, the alternative approaches it offers gives us the opportunity to re-think our present strategies to better achieve long-term benefits for children.

It is my hope that this book will inspire future initiatives to track the country's progress on children's issues. I'm sure the knowledge offered here will help us move closer towards our goal of a Philippines truly fit for children.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vanessa' followed by a period.

VANESSA TOBIN
Country Representative



I'm a breastfed baby!

Introduction

Building a nation fit for children

In 1998, the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) with the support of UNICEF published the pioneering study, *Megatrends: The Future of Filipino Children*. The study attempted to define a vision for the Filipino adult and a scenario for the Filipino family in 2020 by identifying and analyzing issues and trends affecting the Filipino child in the nineties and how these would affect the future of the child twenty-five years hence. The “megatrends” observed in the study formed the bases for scenarios and policy recommendations.

More than a decade later, the 1998 study has been updated, also with UNICEF support. *The Future of Filipino Children: Development Issues and Trends* is a compilation of twelve sectoral papers written by experts in their respective fields. As in the first study, it tracks and analyzes current and emerging issues and trends affecting Filipino children today and how these would affect their future by focusing on five themes: (1) family and community life, (2) human capital, (3) human security, (4) political and economic development, and (5) ICT and communication media.

As in the earlier study, the expert-writers attempted to respond to the following key questions: What early warning indicators and significant trends influence the development of the Filipino child? How are these forces shaping the environment for the coming years? How can today’s decision-makers “intervene” to safeguard the well-being of children and prepare them for the 21st century?

In terms of time frame, the papers show how the issues, indicators and trends affecting Filipino children today will shape the future of the youth and would-be-adults in 2015 and 2020. The year 2015 coincides with the global deadline to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while 2020 is the target year for “A Vision for the Filipino Adult” and “Qualities of Institutions that Would Support the Vision” that were formulated in the *Megatrends* study.

Enabling policymakers

A UNICEF report has noted, “Children pay the heaviest price for our short-sighted policies (and programmes). But certainly, they will also be the beneficiaries of whatever investments we now make for their future.” A futuristic study such as this would enable policymakers in government and other sectors to take a more long-term, holistic and strategic perspective of child survival, protection, participation and development. In supporting the study, UNICEF suggests that “such an initiative may be able to provide decision-makers a better understanding of environmental trends which could contribute towards the crafting of creative and responsive policies.”

The new study has been prepared for use particularly by individuals and organizations in government, business and industry, and civil society involved in socioeconomic planning. For government, the study is envisioned to be valuable to policymakers from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council, and Departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Health (DOH), and Education (DepEd), legislators in the Senate, House of Representatives, and the Sanggunian of Local Government Units (LGUs), and local chief executives such as governors, mayors and barangay captains.

We hope that this report will also be useful to the UN Country Team as it finalizes the Common Country Assessment (CCA) which will serve as basis for the formulation of a new UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in the Philippines. As the different UN agencies prepare their respective country programs, we trust that they will find the issues and insights contained in the papers relevant and compelling. The report can also provide valuable inputs in the preparation of the upcoming Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2012-2016.

The Future of Filipino Children: Development Issues and Trends comes at a time when the nation is

looking forward to a new government. We hope that the policy options and action agenda included in the component papers of this study will be considered by the incoming government in charting a better future for our Filipino children.

Research methodology

The research process was essentially qualitative, with scenario building supported by available data from the National Statistics Office and recent studies, among others. The paper writers themselves were the main source of information, considering that they are well-known and respected experts in their respective areas of study.

In addition to their expert's analysis, additional information was drawn from: (a) interviews (personal or online) with other international or local experts, (b) review/analysis of secondary data especially recent research studies, proceedings of related conferences, and development agency reports, and (c) inputs from peers during policy forums.

As a common framework, all expert-writers used the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as quantitative indicators of children's welfare.

Common reference-documents included the Philippines Midterm Report on the Millennium Development Goals (2007), Concluding Observations: Philippines, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005 and 2009), A World Fit for Children (Goals, Strategies and Actions), "A Vision for the Filipino Adult in the Year 2020" and "Qualities of Institutions (in 2020) that Would Support the Vision" (from Megatrends: The Future of Filipino Children), and "Child 21 Vision for Every Filipino Child" (from Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, 2000-2025).

Tracking commonalities

In examining current and emerging issues and trends under the five themes (i.e., family and community life, human capital, human security, political and economic development, and ICT and communication media), the individual papers came out with fresh insights and scrupulous analysis. At the same time, significant commonalities were tracked across the papers. These commonalities are herein summarized as development challenges and development approaches, as they relate to the well-being of Filipino children today and in the future:

Development Challenges

- The country's paramount challenge is widespread poverty, and children rank third among the basic sectors with the highest poverty incidence.
- Rapid population growth is directly linked to poverty and is an impediment to socioeconomic development.
- The sectors that suffer the most are families with no livelihood or very low level of income, those with minimal or no education, those living in rural areas, indigenous peoples, and children and women.
- The Philippines has no lack of sound plans, programs, policies and laws, but failure lies in the breakdown of law enforcement, inconsistencies and ambiguities in the laws, and difficulties in coordination and implementation.

- Other governance issues that constitute barriers to achieving desired development goals include the ongoing conflict and instability in Mindanao and other rebel-controlled areas, corruption in the political, administrative and justice systems, control of political power by the few, and inadequate funding for basic services and development programs, among others.
- Serious gender issues persist, such as gender inequality in decision making, domestic violence and other forms of abuse against women and children, and feminization of overseas labor migration.
- The economic benefits of overseas employment contrast with immediate and long-term issues such as the safety and security of migrant workers and detrimental effects on the children and family left behind.
- Globalization has opened up the country to various challenges, including a growing demand abroad for workers in domestic work, health care, child minding and club entertainment, and the creation of local jobs from the proliferation of business process outsourcing.
- While the use of new information and communication technologies gives Filipino children and youth a winning edge in this present Knowledge Society, there are many perils in excessive or inappropriate media use at the levels of the individual and of society in general.

The Cyber Age has brought with it a “digital divide” (with a small fraction of households owning personal computers and a minority having access to the Internet), further underscoring the continuing inequities in Philippine society.

- These numerous challenges are multidimensional, interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral in nature.

Development Approaches

- Basic social services, such as health care, education, employment, family planning, and social protection programs, must be viewed as investment rather than expenditure.
- The national government must focus on ensuring investments in public services and on delivering effective regulation and efficient facilitation services.
- Local government units must unconditionally and with a sense of urgency fulfill their front-line role in delivering basic services and socioeconomic interventions to the poorest of the poor and the most disadvantaged, among them the children.
- The multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary nature of development challenges can be best addressed by government through interagency teamwork and collaboration at the national, regional and community levels
- Maximum effectiveness and efficiency can be achieved by focusing on and strengthening approaches that have demonstrated greatest success, such as community- and family-based initiatives and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Focused targeting of lagging regions or poorer localities can address disparities or uneven development, such as high poverty areas which have shown positive signs of development in health or education.

- Positive interventions by civil society and people's organizations can be replicated and scaled up to complement government programs and can be further enhanced with policy and resource support.
- For indigenous peoples, including Muslims, the development process must recognize cultural diversity as an overarching principle and peace negotiations must be grounded on social justice as the basis for harmony and unity.
- Addressing gender biases in various spheres of life and advancing women's participation in development are key to promoting children's rights and welfare.
- Children and youth can be effective agents for development, and their meaningful participation in planning, advocacy and implementation can be a powerful human resource.
- Public information and advocacy in the planning, implementation and monitoring of development programs, projects and activities are critical components to achieve desired goals and targets for national development.
- The new media has opened up opportunities never before existing. With the youth as its most receptive and prolific users, it must now be harnessed as a tool to bridge disparities and reduce inequities in Philippine society.

New Development Paradigms

Given these development challenges and the various approaches proposed, it is evident that working for the welfare and future of Filipino children demands new paradigms that transcend disciplinary biases, sectoral boundaries, geographic borders, political timetables, and personal interests. In this context, the following development paradigms are put forward to enrich perspectives in planning and decision making:

- **Multidisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Approaches**

The multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach enables individuals and organizations to respond to complex development issues and problems in a comprehensive and holistic manner by drawing inputs from various disciplines, e.g., social sciences, natural sciences, and applied areas.

In using the multidisciplinary approach in the social sciences, the issue of peace and security, for example, can be closely examined by drawing from analytical frames, theories, principles and tools of psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, history and communication. A related concept is the transdisciplinary approach wherein issues are examined from an even broader prism by interrelating different basic, applied natural and physical and social sciences.

- Alternative Development Interventions

The popularity of “alternatives” may have emerged from a growing dissatisfaction with “traditional” or mainstream approaches which are perceived to have failed to achieve desired development goals or meaningful changes or reforms. For example, in the education sector, the concept of alternative learning system covers both nonformal and informal education settings as an alternative to traditional schooling. In the communication sector, the public broadcasting system (PBS) and community media are regarded as “alternatives” to mainstream commercial or government-controlled media agencies. In the justice system, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms include mediation, arbitration, conciliation, and negotiation.

- Community-Based Development

Individual and community empowerment has led to preference for bottom-up development strategies where the so-called “beneficiaries” (participants) of development now play an important and active role. This role includes defining development goals, objectives and approaches; planning and managing programs and projects; documenting lessons and experiences; and measuring success and impact. Community-based approaches facilitate experiential learning and popular participation.

The UN 1979 Report on the World Social Situation defines community participation as “sharing by people in the benefits of development, active contribution by people to development and involvement of people in decision making at all levels of society.” The concept of community participation is best captured in the popular African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child.” In the education

sector, school-based management is now recognized in many countries as a preferred approach to making schools effective and relevant to learners’ needs.

- Participatory Development

Closely linked with community-based development is participatory development. It challenges traditional development approaches which are described as elitist and top-down, have the tendency to equate development with modernity, and view local people as mere “objects” of development programs. In contrast, participatory development enables local communities to articulate their priority development needs and participate in the development process – from planning to monitoring and evaluation. Participatory development democratizes “power and control” over development initiatives, decisions, and resources.

- Social Capital as the “Missing Link” in Development Equation

The history of social capital can be traced to the early 1990s. The World Bank considers it to be the “missing link” in the development equation and defines the concept as “the informal rules, norms and long-term relationships that facilitate coordinated action and enable people to undertake cooperative ventures for mutual advantage.” Social scientist Robert Putnam refers to it as “features of social organizations that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefits.” According to Pierre Bourdieu (1985), in ordinary language, social capital is “connections.”

Various studies have identified numerous benefits of social capital. It is a fundamental element in the alleviation of vulnerability and the expansion of opportunities (Moser, 1996). Social

capital is a fundamental element in informal entrepreneurship, “as parts of the informal sector are built on local salient networks, supported by community loyalty, trust and patronage” (Lloyd Evans, 1997).

- Social Protection Framework

Social protection targets the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors. The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) defines it as “policies and programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protecting against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people’s capacity to manage risks.” Social protection has four components: social welfare, labor market interventions, social insurance, and social safety nets.

The social welfare component consists of preventive and developmental interventions that seek to support the minimum basic requirements of the poor and reduce risks associated with unemployment, resettlement, marginalization, illness, disability, old age and loss of family care. Labor market interventions are measures that aim to enhance employment opportunities and protection of the rights and welfare of workers.

Social insurance programs seek to mitigate income risks by pooling resources and spreading risks across time and classes. Examples are micro-insurance, agricultural insurance and social support funds. Social safety nets are stop-gap mechanisms that address effects of economic shocks, disasters and calamities on specific vulnerable groups. Measures include emergency assistance,

price subsidies, food programs, employment programs, retraining programs, and emergency loans.

- A Non-Zero-Sum Development Strategy

In zero-sum context, if one gains, another loses. The concept was first developed in game theory. On the other hand, situations where everybody gets a fair share of benefits or gains together are referred to as non-zero-sum or “win-win.” Application of the non-zero-sum concept is common in economics and other fields of social sciences such as psychology, political science, and communication. Non-zero-sum is particularly relevant in peace negotiations.

- Learning Paradigms

- Lifelong Learning. A lifelong learning mind-set encourages the individual from early childhood to explore the world around him or her, to be curious, to have a sense of wonder, to be inquisitive, to raise questions, to investigate and to probe. It recognizes that learning takes place anytime throughout life and in a range of situations and settings. Knowledge acquisition happens not only in the school but also in the home, community, and workplace, among others. One pursues learning for personal and professional improvement and to be able to contribute to the common good.
- Life-Wide Learning. The Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region defines Life-Wide Learning as a strategy that aims to move student learning beyond the classroom into other learning contexts. Students undergo experiential learning in the family, social service organizations, business organizations, religious organizations, government, mass media, and the Internet, etc. It provides learners with

balanced development covering five domains – intellectual, physical, social, ethical and aesthetics.

- Comprehensive Thinking. This is characterized by a capacity to see the relationship between the social, economic, cultural, political, and technological aspects of the environment and to make decisions on the basis of an understanding of its costs, benefits, and consequences.
- Ecological Intelligence. Ecological intelligence is the capacity to evaluate the costs and consequences of environmental decisions that may appear as environmentally sound but may, in fact, not be so because of the impact of earlier decisions in the production cycle.
- The Family of 21st Century Survival Literacies. The family of 21st Century “survival literacies” includes the following six categories: (1) basic or core functional literacy fluencies of reading, writing, oralcy and numeracy; (2) computer literacy; (3) media literacy; (4) distance education and e-learning; (5) cultural literacy; and (6) information literacy. The boundaries of these related competencies overlap but they should be seen as a closely knit family.
- Team Learning. A team learning approach encourages learners to interact, share and learn from one another. This can be facilitated by teachers and the new information and communication technologies. The team learning environment further facilitates critical and creative thinking.
- Balancing Globalization with “Glocalization”

There are deliberate initiatives to “balance” globalization with local innovations and technologies.

“Glocalization” empowers local communities to participate in the global exchange of ideas, products and services. This has been facilitated by the advent of information and communication technology (ICT). For example, children and young people readily upload through YouTube their arts and music for sharing and exchange with a worldwide audience.

- The Human Rights-Based Approach to Development

The UN Reform Program launched in 1997 calls on all UN agencies to mainstream human rights into their various activities and programs within the framework of their respective mandates. The UN Statement of Common Understanding provides, among others, that human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments should guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.

Among these human rights principles are: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; non-discrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of law. The Statement also provides that development cooperation programs should contribute to the development of the capacities of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and of rights-holders to claim their rights.

- Sustainable Development

The Brundtland Commission defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission

on Environment and Development, 1987). Drawing from the Johannesburg Summit of 2002, the concept has been widened to include social justice and the alleviation of poverty.

- Moral, Spiritual or Transcendent Framework

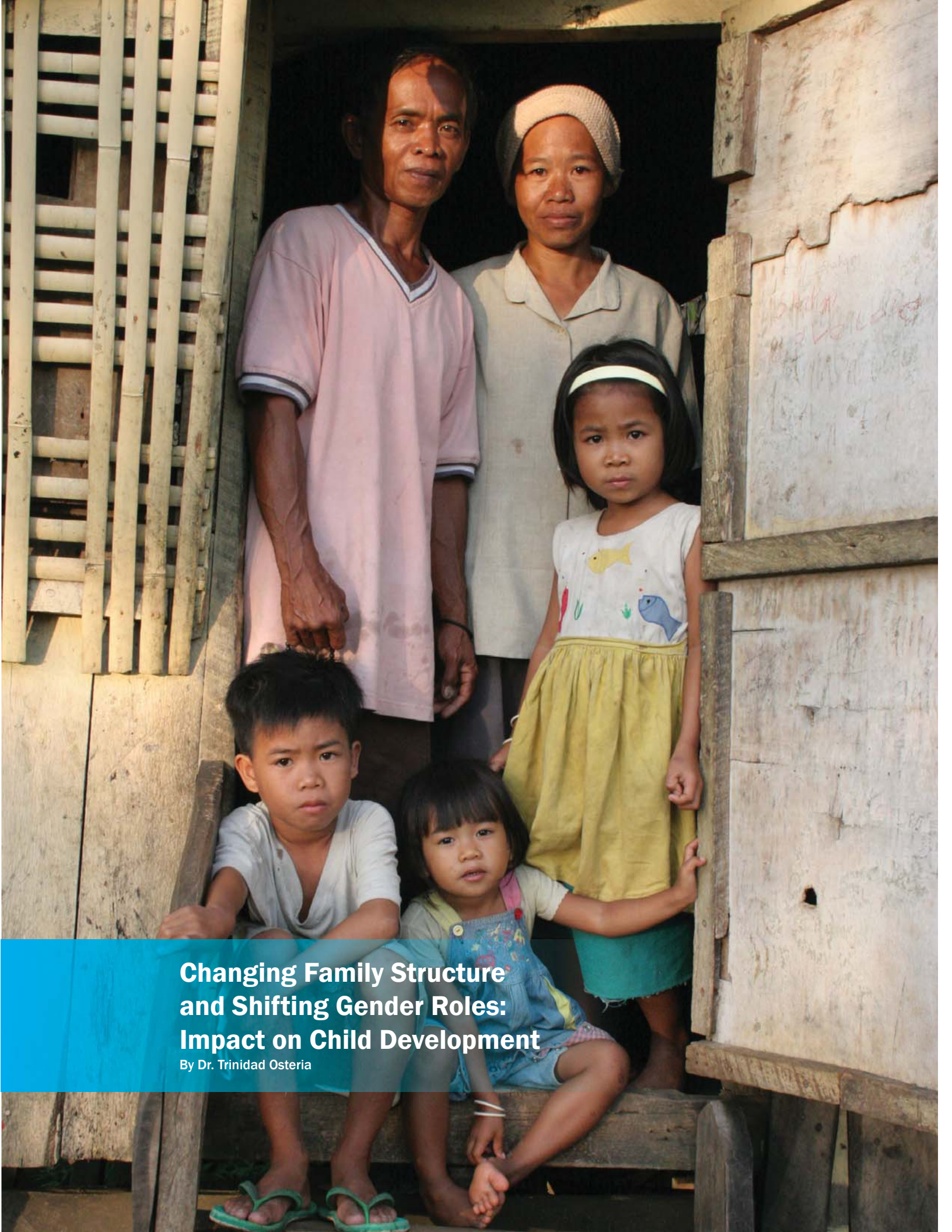
This framework, perhaps the most important backbone of development, is often missing. It encompasses the domains of philosophy and ethics and provides the compass for the other development aspects - social, economic, political, cultural, etc.

- Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach

The MBN Approach is a strategy of prioritizing primary requirements to ensure that the basic needs of the individual, family and community are met. If the family is unable to meet its minimum basic needs on a sustained basis, then the family is considered to be in a state of poverty.

The Minimum Basic Needs-Community-Based Poverty Indicator and Monitoring System (MBN-CBPIMS) is a barangay-based information system that uses indicators for measuring MBN status of local residents. It consists of 33 indicators of which 24 are identified as core indicators of poverty. These indicators are classified as survival needs (e.g., food/nutrition, health, water/sanitation and clothing), security needs (shelter, peace, income and employment), and enabling needs (basic education/literacy, people's participation, family care and psychosocial).

The future of the country a decade or a century hence is already in our midst – in the very lives of today's Filipino children. As this study has tracked issues and identified trends in the national and global environment that impact on them, our fervent hope is that planners and decision-makers at various levels, together with families and communities, shall find compelling reason to match intent with action and to marshal efforts in building a nation truly fit for our children and our children's children.



Changing Family Structure and Shifting Gender Roles: Impact on Child Development

By Dr. Trinidad Osteria

1. Background

In 1998, UNICEF and the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication published the book *Megatrends: The Future of Filipino Children*. One of the sectoral papers focused on gender and family relations which addressed three basic questions:

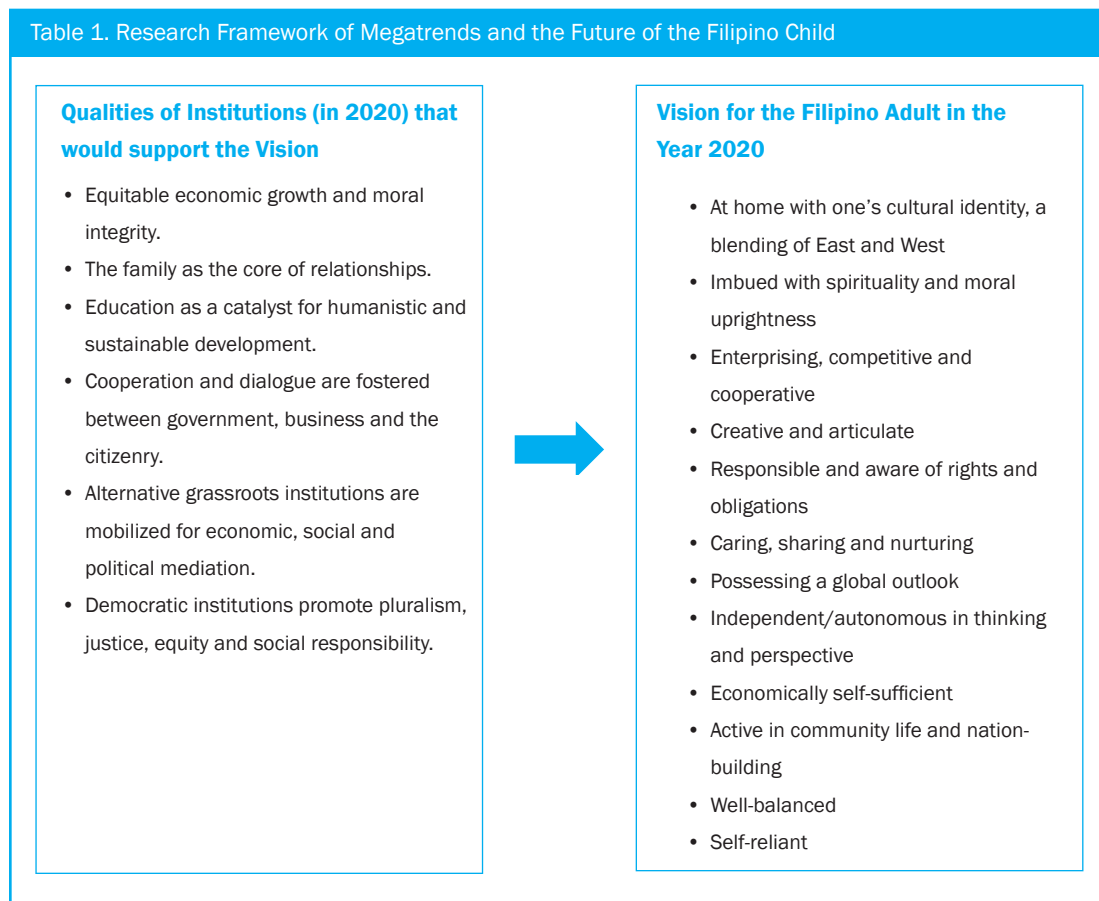
- What forces influence the transformation of the family with concomitant changes in gender-power relations that impact on the Filipino child?
- How are these forces shaping the family environment within the country's

changing socio-political and economic milieu in the next 25 years?

- How can the prevention and response systems preserve the family to safeguard the well-being of children and prepare them for the 21st century?

The analytical framework visualized the Filipino child as a mature adult in 2020. The desired adult attributes are perceived to be achieved through supportive institutions with qualities that catalyze the attainment of the enunciated vision. (Table 1)

Table 1. Research Framework of Megatrends and the Future of the Filipino Child



Source: *Research Framework and Methodology in Megatrends: The Future of Filipino Children*, 1998.

This paper is divided into two parts:

1. An examination of the extent to which the earlier assumptions on shifting family structure and gender roles influence child survival, protection and development were validated in the past decade. Attention is given to external influences that impact on these two entities (family modification and change in gender-power relations); and
2. An analysis of emerging concerns in family and gender relations that may impact on child survival, protection and development in 2020. New and revised trends are presented in the light of these developments.

Basically, it addresses two questions:

- Are the premises on the Filipino family with its delineated gender roles and influence on the vision of the Filipino adult still feasible given the modifications in the external environment?
- How will the changes influence the vision of the Filipino adult by 2020?

Part I: Assessment of the 1998 Scenarios and Their Viability in the 21st Century

The previous book (Megatrends 1) provided the frame for the assessment of women's status, family relations, lifestyles and the development of the child.

In Figure 1, the positive and negative trends related to women and the family are presented with the likely impact on the child. Program/policy options are posited to avert the negative impact. Positive trends for women include: a) political and economic empowerment; b) improved quality of life; and c) autonomy in decision making within the milieu of economic and political development. The negative trends encompass: a) parental migration for employment; b) alternative marriage arrangements; and c) emergence of single- (male or female) headed households as a result of partnership dissolution. These occur against the backdrop of poverty and family dysfunction.

Figure 1. Matrix of Women's Situation, Family Scenario, Likely Impact on the Child, and Program/Policy Options.

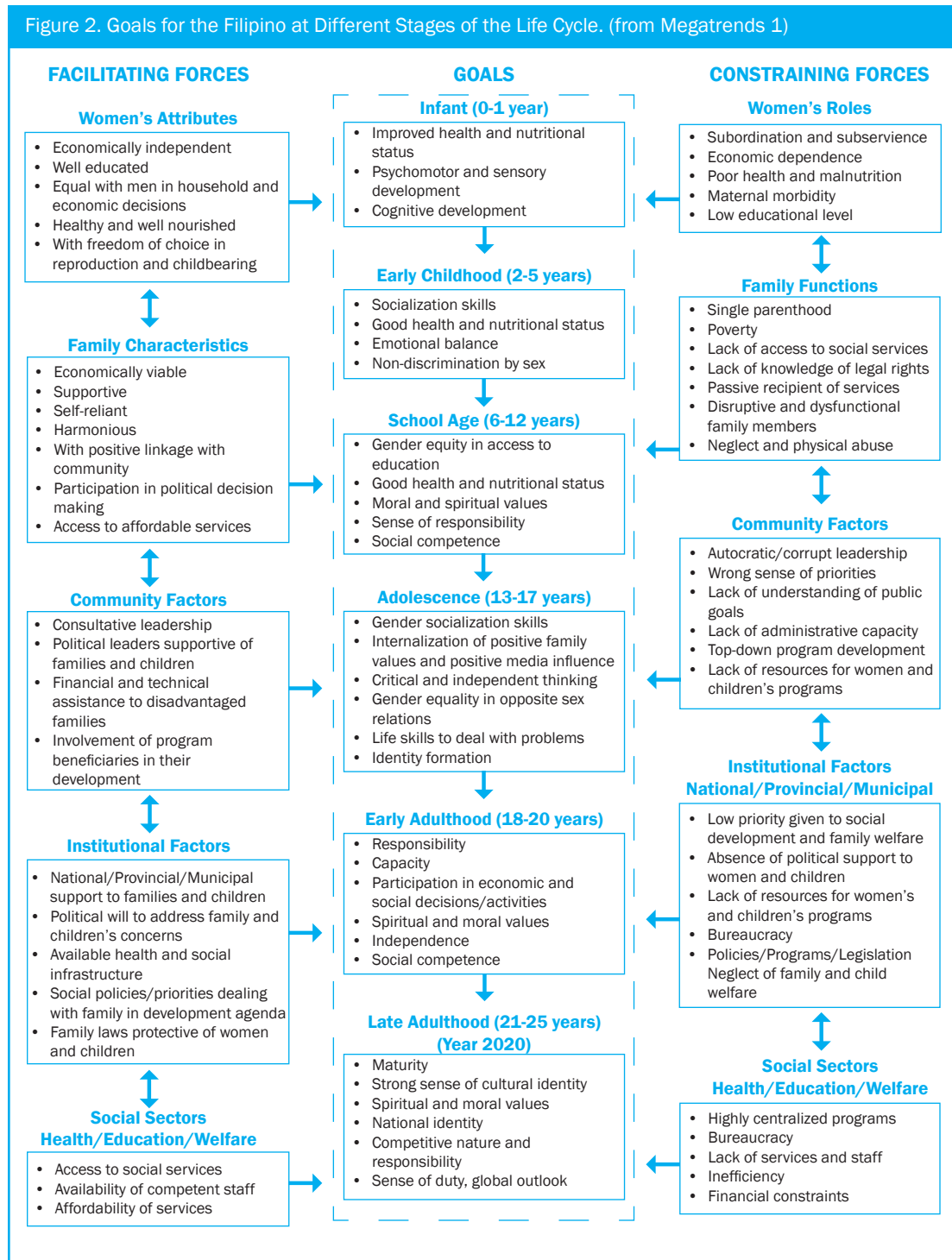
Women's Situation	Family Scenario	Likely Impact on the Child	Program and Policy Options
Positive Trends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased political participation Increased employment opportunity Improved educational attainment Increased access to resources (credit, skills, land) Media portrayal of women in a positive light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced family size Gender equality in decision making and participation in household and economic activities Better standard of living Freedom of choice in reproduction Low dependency level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased survival and decreased morbidity and mortality Access to adequate food and improved nutrition Enhanced childrearing patterns and gender socialization Access to and completion of primary, secondary and tertiary education by girls and boys Access to health services Family bonding and inculcation of spiritual and moral values Establishment of positive role models from the family, media, church and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social development programs dealing with families and children Family code supportive of children independent of their legitimacy status Local government resources meeting the basic needs of women and children Increased number of health centers, schools, teachers and health manpower Food availability, accessibility and affordability Legislative and regulatory mechanisms for creating social safety nets for poor and disadvantaged families and children Legal assistance to children in need of protection GO-NGO partnerships for development
Negative Trends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistence of patriarchy and subordination of women Low level of education and lack of employment Low level of participation in political decision making Ascribed gender roles in the family Negative media influence in terms of gender roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large family size Unilateral decision making of males regarding family and productive activities High level of poverty and poor living standards Lack of access to educational opportunity and health facilities by children Domestic violence Lack of judicial redress for disadvantaged and battered women Poor health and nutrition Multiple burden of productive work and household responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased infant and childhood mortality and morbidity Child malnutrition Low level of education particularly among girls High dropout rates and low completion rates Drug abuse, premarital pregnancy, abortion among adolescents STI and HIV/AIDS prevalence Child labor; child soldiers Early marriage Trafficking, prostitution, pornography Juvenile delinquency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child health programs including immunization Nutrition education and supplementation Improved water and sanitation system Alternative education programs Enhanced information and education programs addressing adolescent problems Health manpower and teachers' training Effective legislation on child protection Social safety nets for families

Source: Osteria, T. 1998. *Gender and Family Relations. In Megatrends: The Future of Filipino Children.*

The goals for the Filipino child at various stages of the life cycle are succinctly presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 identifies the facilitating and constraining forces in women's roles, family attributes,

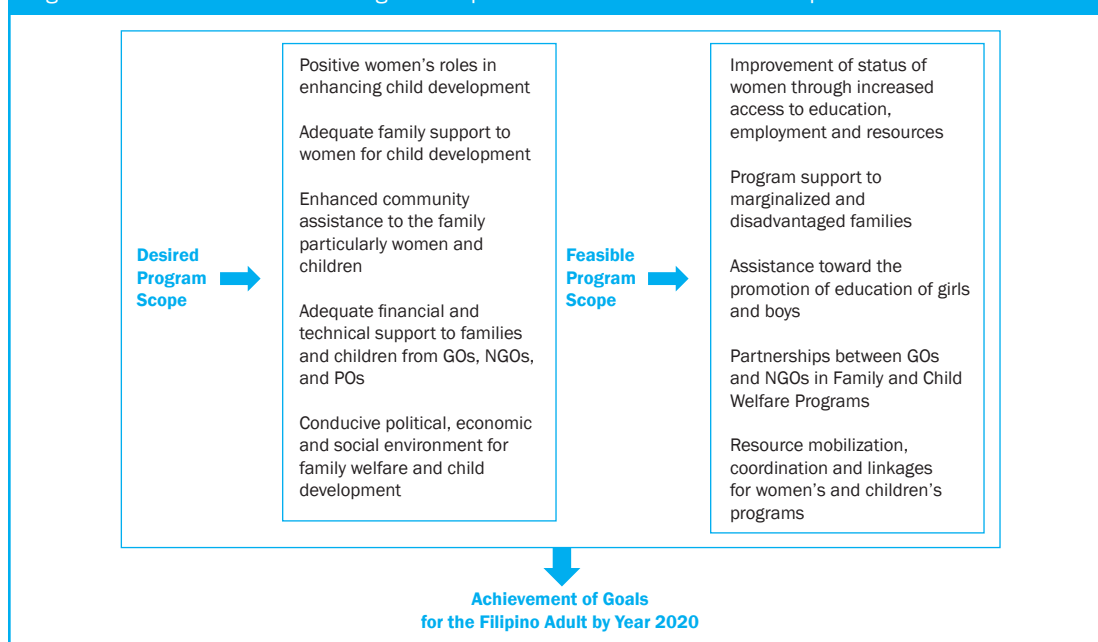
community characteristics, institutional factors and the social sectors that impact on children's welfare at different segments of their life cycle. These forces interact to exert negative or positive influences on the child.



The need to enhance the status of women and strengthen the role of the family as an institution highlights the importance of analyzing the processes in which women, family relations and the external environment promote the development of the child. Clusters of interacting elements, not single factors, account for the success or failure of strategies. The interlocking web links intra-familial dynamics, institutions, programs and policies as they combine and permutate to influence the vision of the Filipino adult by the year 2020. The degree to which these interrelations lead to the achievement of the multiple goals enunciated in Table 1 has to be assessed to draw the lessons. Without an appreciation of how families and institutions through policies and programs influence gender relations and child development, objectives are not likely to be realized and the means of attaining them will be unsustainable. Figure 3 provides the framework for the assessment of program operations where the desired and feasible program scopes are delineated.

Programs will encounter traps and pitfalls if the interaction among key players, their objectives, and program implementation mechanisms are not harmonized. The challenge is to select from among the different configurations the optimum mix that would link the family to a salubrious environment to ensure gender equity among the members and improve the situation of children. The attainment of the vision for the Filipino adult by the year 2020 is an intensive process of operationalizing family micro-level strategies and gender equity in roles and responsibilities by connecting them with relevant institutions to ensure the viability of schemes aimed at child welfare and development. The present concern is how the family's contemporary forms with equitable gender roles can affirm the right and development of the child in the midst of globalization, economic restructuring, financial adjustment and media revolution.

Figure 3. Desired and Feasible Program Scope to Achieve the Vision of the Filipino Adult in 2020



2. Scenario Setting

Development trends that impact on the family with implications on child development form the basis of the three alternative scenarios set with implications on women and children:

- Increasing poverty levels, internal and overseas migration of one parent, nucleation of the family, erosion of values; increase in women-headed households; and rise in poor urban communities.
- Improvement of the status of women brought about by increased labor force participation, educational opportunity, modernization, weakening of traditional ties, and shift toward equitable gender power relations.
- Strong state support to gender equality and the family.

2.1 The first scenario is increasing poverty levels, migration to cities and outside the country for work by one parent, nucleation of family, proliferation of poor communities particularly in urban areas and rise in poor female-headed households.

Increased rural poverty impacts on the family. To augment income, females take low-paying domestic work and piece-rate contracts. The feminization of work carries some negative effects. Paid employment outside the home leads to double burden as women carry the tasks of home management and participation in the informal sector of the economy. Less attention is given to child rearing arising from intra-household tensions.

Urban migration is increasing. The city becomes a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals growing rapidly through urban migration. There is a decline of kinship, neighborhood, and informal groupings with the growth of informal agencies of affiliation and control. Industrialization lags far behind the rate of urbanization and the bulk of migrants find at best marginal employment in cities. The implications on the family and children can be negative. Since urban growth is concentrated in

slums or uncontrolled peripheral settlements, basic amenities are lacking. This urbanization process is profoundly disruptive for it produces a fundamental cleavage between the modernized cities and the traditional village people. Alienation of individuals, particularly men, leads to feelings of hopelessness, anomie, alcoholism, domestic violence and family dysfunction. Likewise, parental migration overseas can create problems as the remaining spouse may have extramarital relations and the children can adopt a consumerist attitude.

2.2 Second, economic development, improvement in female status, and strong community-based structures and resources.

With economic development, males and females gain access to educational and employment opportunities resulting in improvement of female status. The productive employment of more women improves quality of life, living standards and family harmony. With strong supportive structures, people themselves desire change and participate in initiating and managing these change that will impact on children's welfare.

Women's involvement in development is enhanced by resources mobilization in the community. Partnerships between local government units and civil society are forged to increase access to health, education, and welfare services by the family. Consequently, national, local and community support structures facilitate gender equity and enhance the well-being of children.

2.3 Strong state support.

When there is strong state support, laws against discrimination of women in education, public life, employment and health care as well as domestic violence are promulgated and implemented. Legislative support to gender equality validates women's and men's rights to access to resources. Maternity benefits and child care support allow parents to combine family and workplace responsibilities. The family as a participant in the child's development becomes the focal point of state intervention. Children's needs are met by economic and social support services. The family participates actively in the development process of the child. (Osteria, 1998)

3. Prognostication of Alternative Scenarios

3.1 Programmatic Response

In response to the discerned needs of children, government executive, legislative and people's agendas were drawn in the short (1995-1998), medium (1999-2005) and long terms (2005 and beyond) which can catalyze the enunciated goals (UNICEF, 2003). These include:

Executive Agenda

- education for all, ensuring access by children
- multi-sectoral advocacy and mobilization for health, nutrition, population programs
- technical assistance packages for LGUs, NGOs and POs to improve programs directed toward children
- budgetary increases for education, health and other special services for children

Legislative Agenda

- reestablishment of Juvenile and Family Courts; stricter measures against family violence and child abuse
- complete public elementary schools in most barangays and complete high schools in all municipalities
- bureaucratic restructuring to facilitate wider coverage of basic education
- enhancement of quality and relevance of education through legislation on curricular reform and certification of teachers

People's Agenda

- Strengthened advocacy for children's rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Sustained NGO-PO forum on children's rights
- Consolidation of NGO and PO directions on children's concerns
- More networking with GOs and LGUs for program delivery

- Conduct of joint GO-NGO-PO baseline study on children's conditions in depressed rural and urban communities

The impact of the above initiatives has yet to be documented.

4. Disruption of Positive Scenario: The 1997-1998 Financial Crisis

The 1997-1998 financial crisis interrupted the realization of the positive scenario. The crisis involved the decline in foreign exchange that reduced the value of the Philippine currency. This resulted in income reduction and job losses in the country. The impact on children's situation as mediated by increased family poverty was manifold.

Social and Economic Impact of the 1997 Financial Crises

4.1 Increased family poverty

Declining incomes, increased unemployment and rising food prices caused by the peso devaluation increased the poverty of families and presented the apparent outcome of malnutrition and deaths among Filipino children. Aggravating the situation were the global warming and climate changes phenomena which threatened food security. These reduced the availability of food with resulting price increases. Based on the 1998 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey (APIS), around 50 percent of households were affected by these high food prices. The major consequence on the nutrition of children has been the change in dietary intake. With reductions in food availability, adults tended to lessen their intake before children. Despite this, the small amount of food resources resulted in substantive decline in food consumption. (Reyes et al., 1999)

4.2 Curtailment in preventive programs and deterioration of health services affecting childhood morbidity and mortality

Declining incomes, together with reduced government allocation for health programs and increasing prices of medicines, created problems.

Drug prices rose by 20 percent while hospital and private clinic expenses increased. The coverage of immunization and nutrition programs for children and women was reduced due to decreased government spending for these services. Declines in funding for local government units (LGUs) affected the financing of primary health care services. While these reductions occurred across-the-board, the poor families suffered principally. Furthermore, such income reductions increased the number of poor families using public health services. Ability by the public health sector to render services was reduced while demand increased. The impact of the crisis on health particularly of children was compounded by the structural changes in the Department of Health (DOH). Responsibility for many health services was devolved to regional, provincial and local government levels. The budget and personnel for this initiative was seriously affected. Hence, organizational structures in the delivery of health care services to families and children were not adequately developed. (Reyes et al., 1999)

4.3 *Shift from private to public schools with increased pressures on diminished resources*

Government budgetary constraints and the shift from private to public schooling as a result of the crisis worsened the problems in education as follows:

In the late 1990s, primary school completion rates averaged only 65 percent with marked regional disparities:

- The completion rate was almost 100 percent in Manila but less than 30 percent in Mindanao and Eastern Visayas.
- At the elementary school level, about six children shared one textbook; and at the secondary level, the corresponding average was eight.
- Classrooms and school equipment were lacking. Class schedules were divided into two shifts a day, and student-to-teacher ratios were high.

- Quality of education was low – Filipino children's scores in mathematics, science and reading were very much below international averages.
- Inadequate food intake limited pupil attendance and completion.

Therefore, the crisis impacted on education through:

- Declines in enrolment and increase in dropout rates which were prevalent in specific communities, such as the urban poor, subsistence farmers, and upland and fishing areas;
- Dropout rates were higher at the secondary education level; and
- There was increased absenteeism and decline in student participation in special school activities. (ibid)

5. Impact on Family Support

5.1 *Increased unemployment*

An immediate impact of the crisis was increased unemployment which severely affected the family. With the reduction in overseas employment, the total number of Filipino workers deployed in Asia decreased by almost 25 percent in the first quarter of 1998, compared with the first quarter of 1997. This, coupled with increased prices, placed many families in jeopardy with major implications for children. (Reyes et al., 1999)

5.2 *Double burden for women*

A higher proportion of women were forced to seek outside employment even with low pay to augment the family income. In many cases, daughters were required to do household tasks and care for younger siblings. The need to assist in home chores prompted daughters to drop out of school. Boys also dropped out of school to work in menial tasks.

In view of the external circumstances surrounding the family and the tensions arising therein, be

they economic, social or cultural, situations occur in which the child was expected to work for and with the family. With increased tension and psychological distress arising from poverty, children were often abused or neglected and their right to physical integrity was ignored on the assumption that the primacy of the family automatically confers on parents the right to make correct and informed judgments with respect to the responsible upbringing of future citizens. (UNICEF, 1994)

6. Lessons from the Crisis

6.1 *Sufficient family resources are a key to mitigating the crisis' impact on children*

Families rely on their own resources to provide food, shelter and education for their children. These are drawn from savings, assistance from relatives, and community support. The resource base can be improved by additional income from women. Families also respond to economic crisis by consumption reduction which limits expenses to bare needs. Hence, adequate income, sufficient savings, livelihood skills and other economic sources from initiatives such as microfinance can provide protection against family strain. Concerns are raised on the degree in which family resources can meet their basic needs. Those without resources – those near or below the poverty line and with special needs –are the most vulnerable to the shocks. (Reyes et al., 1999)

6.2 *Social services are essential elements in family support.*

The availability and accessibility of social services are essential elements for the family support system. Available programs need to be in place to reduce the effects of income reduction. Community participation in the delivery of social services needs to be assessed.

7. Poor Families and Child Labor

Poor families' perspectives become extremely short term as hand-to-mouth existence makes surviving each day an extreme challenge. This short-term horizon is influenced by poverty which can affect a

household and aggravate its dire situation. Social conflicts and personal family tragedies (deaths, illnesses, unemployment) occur. Hence, the desire for instant returns outweighs investing in further education of the children. (Lim, 2002)

The value system of the family and constituent members plays a big factor in:

- the importance given to education;
- the value of child labor;
- gender discrimination that prevent girls from attending school to work; and
- discrimination in pay based on sex or type of work of children. (Lim, 2002)

Underdeveloped economies have production mechanisms that rely heavily on unskilled manual labor. In unskilled labor activities, the difference between adult's and child's productivity is not much. Due to a child's lower wage, the chances of employing children, whether in family-based activities or those outside the home, are increased. Developing countries rely on the agricultural and informal service sectors for the employment of majority of their workers. The increase in child workers in these sectors attests to this.

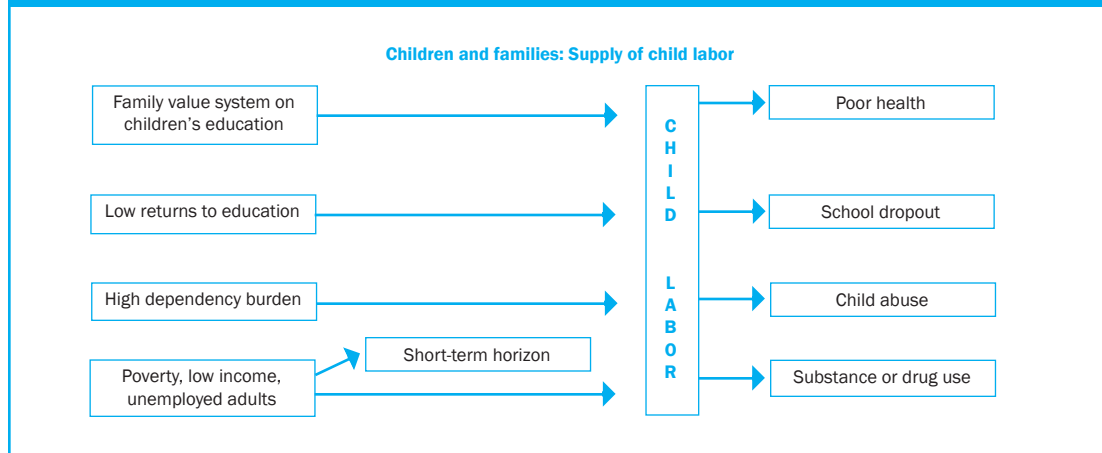
In Figure 4, it is shown that the family value system is affected by perceived low returns to the education of children, the high dependency burden accruing from a large family size, poverty and unemployment. These lead to encouragement of child labor with negative outcomes on children.

8. Programmatic Achievements

Accomplishments related to child development and welfare during the 1999-2003 period as shown in the UNICEF 2001 midterm review were as follows:

- The objectives of strengthening the capacity of 25 local government units (LGUs) to manage basic services and support family efforts to raise, nurture and protect children were largely on track. The successful modeling of an

Figure 4. Factors Contributing to Child Labor at the Family Level.



Source: Joseph Anthony Lim. 2002. ADB. *Regional Review: Child Labor*.

integrated approach for convergent service delivery at the LGU level has been sealed up within the project areas since 2002 and has stimulated an additional 33 provinces and cities to develop plans for children to be implemented using their own resources. LGUs were selected based on a set of criteria, including low social development indicators spread across the country (13 of 17 regions are covered), counterpart funding, and other expressions of interest from the LGU. Effective advocacy prompted the formulation of policy frameworks on safe motherhood, adolescent and youth health and development, and child health and development.

- An evaluation study in two project areas showed that women, particularly in marginalized communities, who attended female/caregiver functional literacy classes, not only enhanced their personal skills and self-confidence, but also improved health-caring and seeking behaviors, becoming active stakeholders in program design and implementation. In another example, community volunteers were empowered through training to enhance child growth. They mobilized communities to establish, in hard-to-reach areas, some 2,200 health and nutrition posts to train mothers and provide

growth monitoring services, micronutrient supplementation, and management of minor illnesses. A rapid appraisal in two provinces and one city showed a strong correlation between mothers who attended at least 50 percent of the sessions and the improved growth of their children. (UNICEF, 2003)

9. Legislation

- In 2003, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (Republic Act 9208) to eliminate trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, established institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of trafficked persons, provided penalties for traffickers and also prohibited the recruitment, transport or adoption of children for engagement in armed activities in the Philippines or abroad.
- In 2003, Republic Act No. 9231, which amended the Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (Republic Act No. 7610), provided for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and afforded stronger protection for the working child.

- In 2004, Republic Act No. 9255 allowed illegitimate children to use the surname of their father, amending the Family Code of the Philippines (Article 176 of Executive Order No. 209).
- In 2004, the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act (Republic Act No. 9262) defined violence against women and their children and provided for protective measures for victims and penalties for the perpetrators of this violence. (UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, 2005)

Part II: Developments in the Family and Attainment of the Vision of the Filipino Child in 2025

10. The Vision of Child 21

The Child 21 or the Philippine National Strategic Framework of Plan Development for Children clearly describes the vision for Filipino children in 2025 and a roadmap to achieve it. Following a life cycle and a rights-based approach, it synchronizes family, community and national efforts for the realization of the rights of the child by 2025. This is succinctly presented in Figure 5.

Within the purview of the Child 21 Vision and that for the Filipino Adult in 2020, two questions form the basis of discussions and debates:

- What would be the effective strategies for promoting and enhancing children's capacities to be mature adults while appropriate levels of protection are provided by the family?
- How far should the government intervene in family life to promote the capacity of children to become mature adults in 2025?

Figure 5. Child 21 Vision

Our vision is that by 2025, every Filipino child will be:

- Born healthy and well, with an inherent right to life, endowed with human dignity
- Happy, loved, and nurtured by a strong, stable and God-loving family
- Living in a peaceful, progressive, gender-fair, and child-friendly society
- Growing safe in a healthy environment and ecology
- Free and protected by a responsive and enabling government
- Reaching her (his) full potential with the right opportunities and accessible resources
- Imbued with Filipino values steeped in her (his) indigenous cultural heritage
- Assertive of her (his) rights as well as those of others
- Actively participating in decision-making and governance, in harmony and in solidarity with others, in sustaining the Filipino nation.

Source: *Child 21. A Legacy to the Filipino Children of the 21st Century, Philippines National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, 2000-2025.*

11. The Family Environment and Outcomes on Children

Within the vision is the permeating role of a nurturing family environment ensuring parental care and support of the child without gender discrimination through all the stages of the life cycle. Critical in creating this enabling environment is the strengthening of the capacity of families to nurture children and provide them with full support.

11.1 Family, Gender Relations and Child Development

Families are critical to the perception, reasoning and intuition of children. Parents provide the positive developmental path by stimulating children's actions. Parents can assist children to balance their emotional needs with independence. They are instrumental in children's relationships with others. In adolescence, family rearing patterns are transformed in a way so that the youth emerge as independent, young adults capable of reciprocal relations. These domains include mental health,

social competence, healthy relationships with members of the opposite sex, and sufficient education and training for economic autonomy. Parents who promote strong identity formation and social competence in adolescents accept their personhood and individual points of view. Another element of successful parenting is the monitoring and supervision of children's activities outside the home, and the encouragement of their involvement in growth-enhancing activities in school or the community. The family environment contributes to intellectual competence encompassing verbal expression, problem-solving skills, logical reasoning, and social intelligence. Poverty places children at a disadvantage because they are likely to experience abusive and dysfunctional home environments. These result in delays in development. Slow and inadequate start in school leads to continued problems because of lower capacity and problems in the home. To predict child outcomes, the quality of both mothering and fathering should be considered. Parenting is strongly influenced by the mother-father relationship. (Chase-Lansdale, 1998)

Low-income parents tend to have higher levels of family problems due to depression, anger, and alcoholism. In extreme poverty, parents in a slum community will keep children inside the home due to mistrust of their neighbors. Parenting in low-income families also appears to be unpredictable due to manifold problems. This varies from complete neglect to physical punishment. All of these family processes result in behavioral and emotional problems in addition to poor performance in school. (Chase-Lansdale, 1998)

In a society marked by gender stereotypes and biases, children learn to adopt gender roles which are inequitable to both sexes. As they move from childhood to adolescence, they are exposed to many factors which influence their attitudes and behaviors regarding the other sex. These are learned first in the home and reinforced by peers, school experience, and television viewing. However, the strongest influence on gender role development is the family, with parents passing both overtly and covertly to their children their own biases about gender (Witt, 1997). Children experience the process of gender role socialization through

games and interaction with other relatives, where expectations are transmitted.

The impact of a shift of the family from two parents to one can be traumatic. There have been hypotheses that children in families disrupted by separation are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems. They are also more likely to perform poorly in school and become delinquents. These children are likely to have a harder time relating to others. A dysfunctional family is one in which the relationship between parents and children is strained. This is due to the fact that one of the family members has a serious problem that affects other members who adopt atypical roles within the family to allow it to survive. The children assume certain functions to make up for the deficiencies of parenting. (Boyd, 1992)

Family responses to problems could be:

- a) paternal alcoholism;
- b) emotional or psychological disturbance; and
- c) physical or sexual abuse.

12. The Filipino Family and Gender Roles

12.1 *Traditional Gender Roles in Families*

In the Philippines, gender roles within the family conform to the social expectations of the different members – husband, wife, daughters, sons. Therefore, the male and female members adjust their behavior and reactions according to what culture and society dictate. Husband and wife perform their respective roles to ensure that the relationship is complementary and harmonious. The societal culture sets the tone for the fulfillment of their role expectations. Masculinity and femininity are distinctive concepts with corresponding attributes. (Medina, 2001)

Traditionally, husbands and wives have definitive functions. Females have the responsibility for the upkeep of the home, childbearing and child rearing, while the males are involved in economic activities. Physical superiority is attributed to the

husband. Men are expected to be strong, self-confident and rational. Females are caring, warm, supportive and nurturing. The masculine-feminine divide is established through socialization, peer group standards, and cultural norms. The differential gender role allocation within the family still prevails in many rural communities, ascribing to the husband economic support and to the wife domesticity. The ideal wife is one who is virtuous, patient, submissive, and puts the needs of husband and children before her own. At different stages of the life cycle of the child, gender differentiated roles are instilled by the parents and relatives through toys, games and sex-allocated household responsibilities. Stereotyping of male and female roles in school and media is demonstrated succinctly in courses, textbooks and television (e.g., a woman cooking for the children and the husband coming home from work). (Medina, 2001)

12.2 *Changing Structure of the Family and Implications on Gender Roles*

12.2.1 *Shifting Roles and Responsibilities*

At the end of the twentieth and the advent of the twenty-first century, there have been changes in the structure of the family, emanating from globalization, trade liberalization, overseas labor migration, and urban-to-rural movement of the population. Notable features of the family are its nucleation and the rise of single-parent households. Besides, there has been an increase in alternative marital lifestyles, such as live-in relationships and same-sex unions. Due to these developments, the roles of husband and wife have changed, conferring greater autonomy to women. The need to achieve a work-life balance becomes pressing as more women bear the burden of earning and housekeeping. Aside from the basic obligations of childbearing and domestic chores, the woman shares with the husband the burden of financial support to the family. The option of participating in social, political and community activities is open to them. All over the country, the husband is sharing the responsibility for domestic work and in the economic support of the family. The rise of small-scale family enterprises has also been noted. While better educated women work for

self-fulfillment and satisfaction, their less educated counterparts are also seeking to improve their situations.

Participation in the traditional labor market in the rural areas, such as agriculture, poultry or livestock raising, cottage industries, and storekeeping, does not detract from household chores. Hence, such tasks do not conflict with women's household responsibilities. (Ofreneo, 1999, in Medina, 2001.) When a crisis at the household and community level occurs, it is the women who take the brunt, finding ways to support the family. (Tan, 2008)

Traditionally, aside from being the breadwinner in the household, male roles include repairs in the household, cleaning of roof gutters, and small constructions in the home. There was the perception that when the husband can afford to raise a family, the wife does not have to work. More recently, this thinking has changed to an appreciation of the wife's involvement in the family economic support.

12.3 *Impact of Parental Role Modification on the Family*

The family is at the core of the network of institutions – social, economic, political and religious – that influence the well-being of children. It adjusts to the changing environmental circumstances and responds to crisis situations. Besides, opportunities alter the role of members and modify the ascribed gender functions. The individual members' beliefs, behavior and attitudes as differentiated by sex and molded by parents and immediate relatives are now being questioned and rationalized.

Medina (2001) succinctly presented the changes in the family which could be attributed to modernization, urbanization and industrialization.

- a) More favorable attitudes toward working wives and mothers. The shift of production functions from the home to the workplace opened up new opportunities for female employment. Increased job opportunities, higher educational attainment, reduction in the number of children, and social legislation on women's rights have contributed to

the development of a favorable attitude towards working wives and mothers.

- b) Changing role structure of the family. The employment of wives affects the role structure of the family. Since the wife works, it is more likely that household chores and child care will be equally shared with the husband.
- c) Decline in the authority of the husband/father. The shift in the economic activities from the home to the workplace, the many hours of work away from home which deprive the husband/father the opportunity to exercise authority in the family, the working wife's increased independence from the husband, and the enhanced government protection and services for women and children are few of the factors accounting for the erosion of the authority of the husband/father. The shift from a unilateral paternal decision to couple discussion, consensus, and compromise reduces the authority of the father.
- d) Decline of the family's influence on the individual. The family traditionally sets the tasks members are to perform. Currently where many tasks are done outside the home by individuals rather than by families, the influence of the family over the members declines. The family member becomes more dependent on outside agencies, their peers, and the media.
- e) More lenient norms and behavior. With the urban agglomeration of people from different social strata and the corresponding anonymity that goes with it, the city becomes the center of social disorganization and problems. The distance between home and the workplace reduces family and community interactions which are strong in the village and rural settings. Social pressure which deters deviant behavior in a closely-knit community is weakened in the city. All these contribute to a more

liberal definition of appropriate behavior of the modern generation.

- f) Breakdown of the consanguineal family as a functional unit. The old system of family relationships is no longer as strong and significant. The individual's closeness to the kin group is weakened by the cosmopolitanism of the urban-industrial population. Many non-kin personal contacts and relationships are established in the workplace, schools or recreational centers, as well as in the neighborhood.

Technological advancement, greater media exposure, and better opportunities characterize the Filipino society which is in transition. It presents a composite of the modern and traditional systems. Some of the features of this transitional state are (Medina, 2001):

- a) Individual mate selection as opposed to the traditional parental involvement in the choice of lifetime partner.
- b) Trend toward intermarriages with breakdown of endogamous preference in mate selection.
- c) Increasing openness in the discussion of sex and greater interaction between the sexes.
- d) Double burden for women in assuming domestic tasks and childcare together with paid work.
- e) Increasing fragility of marriage as reflected in separation, overseas migration, annulment, and consensual union. A rise in single-parent families is perceived.
- f) Breakdown of the authority of elders as a result of better education of children and financial independence.

Young people question the authority of their elders. They value their freedom and autonomy to make their own decisions. Social and economic changes

challenge the stability of the family. Conflicts in values can lead to deviance in behavior and family disharmony where children seek solace and support outside the household. The changing family structure may bring about strains, conflicts and maladjustments.

The wife's participation in the labor force can also affect the couple's relations leading to domestic violence. The most endemic form of violence against women is wife abuse or physical harm inflicted by male partners. Surveys generally underestimate the extent of physical violence in intimate relationships. This situation is attributed to the women's social conditioning of accepting physical and emotional chastisement as a husband's marital prerogative, thereby limiting the range of behavior considered as abuse (Heise et al., 1994). Such acceptance is reinforced by relatives and the community. Therefore, domestic violence is seen as a normative behavior for sons and daughters.

13. Impact of Shifting Gender Roles in the Family on Children

Childbearing is important in Filipino marriages. Traditionally, a child is expected to assist the parents. The marital bond is not complete without children. Due to the perspective that male members are breadwinners, sons are desired for financial support of parents and to carry the family name. Daughters are expected to be involved in the household activities in preparation for their married lives. There is also the belief that marriage is strengthened by children. They intervene in misunderstandings between husband and wife. Parents are important in the early stages of a child's life because they instill the roles, values and ethics of the community that sons and daughters must uphold. While there is concern that a mother's involvement in work outside the home can lead to child neglect or delinquency, it is somewhat rationalized by the fact that relatives serve as surrogates in child care. Among the better educated parents, more permissive disciplining modes are presently adopted. In rural areas, physical punishment is still used to discipline children. (Medina, 2001.)

Differences in life outcomes are largely determined by the characteristics of the family, such as its composition and social and economic resources. One fundamental characteristic of the Filipino family that has significant and sustaining effects on children is its structure – that is, the number and relationships of members. A family structure can constrain the availability of economic and social resources such as parents' ability to spend time with their child, to be involved in their educational activities, and to allocate finances to promote positive educational outcomes and well-being. Family structure can facilitate or limit the ways in which parents are able to positively influence the future of their children. What is less understood is in what domains family structure matters and the magnitude of its effects over time. (Schneider, 2005)

In her review of empirical researches, Marquez (2004) demonstrated that young people who have been exposed to a variety of nontraditional living arrangements and family disruption developed more accepting attitudes toward premarital sex, have an increased likelihood of early sexual activity and childbearing as well as increased prevalence of nonsexual risk behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol intake, drug use, theft and vandalism. Adolescents who grew up under the supervision of the father alone, or the father with another partner, exhibited greater propensity toward some risk behaviors, particularly drug use, and commercial and premarital sex. Meanwhile, having two biological parents in the home has been linked with postponement of sexual activity and with fewer partners during their lifetime. The increasing urbanward mobility of the young population, especially among the females, leads to greater independence and weakening of parental control. Living away from home is the most important variable linked to premarital sex risks among Filipino young adults. (Marquez, 2004)

The Filipino family, which serves as the primary social group of the adolescent, is under stress due to absentee parenting and unstable marital unions. This is largely due to the options taken by parents as they deal with the pressures of a changing environment. Such change together with increasing migration by the adolescents gives rise to new living arrangements, increasing their vulnerability

to risks. Family control over adolescents declines due to peer and media influence. Family values and parental guidance continue to show a significant influence in neutralizing the effects of media and peers. A strong, stable and intact family environment reduces the impact of external influences on adolescent. In the face of these risks, it becomes important to strengthen the family as the primary support source for adolescents and children. "Specifically, fathers who are viewed as heads of the family but functionally distant due to their work outside the home should strive for greater involvement in domestic affairs. As role models for their sons, their presence in the home is necessary." (Cruz et al., 2001)

Contextual and social systems in the family are important. Socioeconomic variables, like limited income, unemployment, large family size, and unplanned and single parenthood, contribute to the expression of violent behavior toward children. Poverty has emerged as a significant predictor of abuse, and parental singularity or isolation has been regarded as a significant correlate. Often, economic hardship increases inconsistent, rejection-oriented parental discipline. Heavy income loss, likewise, leads to punitive and arbitrary patterns of child rearing. Economic hardship strains both spouse-spouse and parent-child relationships, creating even more emotional and behavioral problems for children. (Bautista, Roldan & Bacsal, n.d.)

Moreover, Filipino parents tend to perceive their children as extensions of themselves rather than individuals with their own rights. Some Filipino parents value children to the extent that they can give financial contributions to the household.

The attitude toward children as primarily beneficial to the family rather than as beneficiaries of the family is more explicit among families who live in poverty because the usefulness of children begins at a very early age of producers and direct contributors to family income. For middle and upper class families, it is only in later years, when children are in school (school achievement being a source of pride and fulfillment for parents), or when the children are young working adults, or in their parents' old age that this view of children becomes evident. (Bautista et al., n.d.)

As a result of the divergent outlooks of the two generations, peer pressure and media exposure, parents can lose control over their children. Complaints that children are no longer as meek as they used to be are prevalent. Children respond to the slightest scolding, answering back with disrespect. Due to the adherence to the old norms of conduct, parents are disappointed with the actions of young people. In response to modernization, parents have become more accepting in dealing with their children. They listen to their expression of concern. Parents are adapting gradually to the changing times by shifting their child-rearing orientation from dependency to independence, from restrictiveness to permissiveness, from extreme control to autonomy, and from authoritarianism to liberalism and individuality. While acknowledging the well-being and rights of the family, there is the challenge of encouraging the sense of connection that families provide. (Bautista, Roldan & Bacsal, n.d.)

In doing so, policies should foster the parent-child link. The distinctive mandate of family policy is to support key family relationships that promote women's empowerment and gender equity: a more equitable balance of male and female responsibilities for children, affordable and self-child care and support. Efforts to increase economic opportunities of poor families are an essential element of their strengthening without which family policies cannot be effective. (Bruce et al., 1995)

14. Capacity Building of Children to Become Mature Adults

The traditional assumption that children are helpless and dependent while parents are competent hinders the realization by adults of what children are capable of knowing and performing. Where children's economic contribution to their families affirms an interdependent relationship, the children consistently demonstrate the extent to which they renegotiate adult-imposed boundaries, assert autonomy and take initiative to shape their own lives. While in a relationship of relative powerlessness, they nevertheless adopt a range of strategies, including those designed to avoid work, to enlist support in tasks undertaken

or to renegotiate workload. These strategies involve using younger siblings, pretending not to hear, prolonging tasks in order to avoid others, demonstrating the burden of the workloads, negotiating between tasks or between siblings. The transfer of control over decision making and the gradual assumption of the right to exercise decision making and other responsibilities by children can be made by increasing children's competence in their capacities by providing them with adequate understanding of the risks involved, increasing opportunities for them to gain confidence and make informed choices, allowing them to make decisions, and respecting their right to make choices. (Chase-Lansdale, 1998)

Access to appropriate information is a key to promoting children's protection, and helping them make safe and appropriate choices. Denying such access does not prevent children from taking risks but rather increases the likelihood that they will fail to protect themselves adequately in doing so. (Chase-Lansdale, 1998)

15. Development Issues and Challenges

The basic concern is how change in family structure and accompanying shift in parental gender roles influence the attainment of the vision for the Filipino adult in 2020.

This question is addressed against the background of two alternative economic and social environments:

- A. Positive Environment – Sustained high economic growth with corresponding increase in productive employment and income, and improved standard of living. The government support system (education, health and welfare services) is in place and working. Policies and legislation are supportive of the family, gender equality and children. Children have access to education and social services.

The positive outcomes on children are:

- a) a strong sense of identity

- b) socialization skills and acquisition of positive values
- c) cognitive and socio-emotional development
- d) enhancement of intellectual abilities
- e) independence
- f) awareness and preservation of human rights
- g) respect for human values, cultural identity and heritage
- h) freedom of expression
- i) completion of education at all levels

- B. Negative Environment – Deterioration in the economy, inadequate social services (health, education, welfare), increased unemployment and decreased incomes, gender inequality, multiple burdens of women, and family breakdown and dysfunction.

The negative outcomes on children are:

- a) child labor with vulnerability to worst forms of maltreatment and exploitation
- b) child neglect, physical abuse, battering
- c) malnutrition, morbidity, mortality
- d) child delinquency
- e) school dropout, illiteracy
- f) sexual promiscuity, high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, premarital pregnancy
- g) drug abuse and addiction
- h) impaired intelligence
- i) depression, restlessness, low self esteem

- j) difficulty in handling anger and controlling urges
- k) poor interpersonal skills
- l) inability to handle conflict
- m) passivity and withdrawal

conversant with the influence of the family on child development and ensure that the rights of children are exercised and upheld.

16. Recommendations

16.1 Policy

- Implement and sustain poverty alleviation policies, as lack of resources is the most important factor pushing children to participate in the child labor market. Legislation should be promulgated and enforced to ensure that children are not exposed to exploitation and abuse.
- In drafting family policies for the benefit of children, an ecosystem approach should be adopted where the family is viewed within a larger system within which it interacts (community, institutions, social sectors, etc.).
- Introduce policy and legislation that encourage parents to enable children to participate in decisions affecting them.
- Family-sensitive policies should be formulated in the field of housing, work, health, social security and education. The family's various forms and functions should be taken into account through support of educational programs concerning parental roles, parental skills and child development. The capacity to monitor the impact of social and economic decisions and actions on the well-being of families, on the status of women within families, and on the ability of families to meet the basic needs of children should be developed. (ICPD, 1994)
- Legislators, national and local leaders, and policymakers should be fully

16.2 Programmatic Interventions

- Institute family strengthening programs to prevent adverse outcomes on children and reduce gender discrimination. Major factors to consider in the selection of the most appropriate program are the risks children are facing and the level of family functions. Models of intervention can include parent education, support groups, behavioral modification, skills training and therapy.
- Adopt crisis intervention models addressing chronic, multiproblem families through comprehensive services (economic, health, nutrition, etc.).
- Integrate support for responsible, committed and involved fatherhood into current social services. Paternal contribution should go beyond financial support. Health, education and social welfare programs should involve fathers in unique ways to contribute to their children's development.
- Maintaining the family as a unit preserves the bonding and loving relationship with the parents and siblings and allows the children to grow and develop within the culture and environment most familiar to them. Therefore, the goal is to maintain children in their own homes by strengthening families so that they can meet their children's developmental needs and protect them from harm. Efforts must be made to empower families to meet the needs of their children and resolve the problems that lead to maltreatment.
- The government should provide and promote means to facilitate compatibility between labor force participation and parental responsibilities, especially for

single-parent households with young children. Such means could include health insurance and social security, day-care centers and facilities for breast-feeding mothers within the work premises, part-time jobs, paid parental leaves, paid maternity leaves, flexible work schedules, and reproductive and child health services. (ICPD, 1994)

- Enhance actions to promote respect for children's evolving capacities through promoting parent education and support that address:
 - a) the right of children to participate in all decisions affecting them
 - b) the importance of recognizing and respecting the extent of children's capacities
 - c) the right of children not to be burdened with inappropriate levels of expectation or responsibility
 - d) the value to all family members of enabling children to take responsibility for those decisions they are capable of making, to participate in all decisions affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously. (Chase-Lansdale, 1998)
- Develop innovative ways to provide more effective assistance to families and the individuals within them who may be affected by specific problems, such as extreme poverty, chronic unemployment, illness, domestic and sexual violence, drug or alcohol dependence, incest, child abuse, neglect or abandonment.

In addition to the above recommendations, the following are posited:

- Standardize evaluation of the impact of changing family structure and shifts in gender roles on child welfare through appropriate methodologies and a set of appropriate indicators.
- Adopt a national advocacy agenda for the promotion of the role of the family and gender equality in familial roles for child welfare and development.
- Enhance partnerships of government, NGOs and civil society groups in pursuing gender equality, male responsibility and female empowerment within the family to ensure the physical, mental and emotional development of the child.

In 1994, the UN Program for the International Year of the Family stated that:

The family is the natural framework for the emotional, financial, and material support essential to the growth and development of its members, particularly infants and children... It remains a vital means of preserving and transmitting cultural values. (UN, 1994)

These roles of culture preservation, children socialization, and promotion of gender equality make the family indispensable to society, as it transforms helpless and dependent infants into responsible and independent adults.

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A young woman with a joyful expression is seated in the passenger area of a vehicle. She is wearing a vibrant red long-sleeved shirt and a white, textured headband. Her hands are resting on a silver Canon mirrorless camera. The interior of the vehicle is visible, featuring yellow-painted metal structural bars and a grey control panel with a white lever. The background shows a glimpse of the vehicle's exterior and a dark, circular object, possibly a wheel or a mirror.

Promoting Gender Equality: Opportunities and Challenges

By Dr. Carolyn I. Sobritchea

Introduction

Equality between women and men has been a goal of the United Nations since its establishment after the Second World War. The 1945 Preamble to the UN Charter reaffirms the “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small.” Over the last four decades, various UN bodies and multilateral development organizations have pursued strategic measures to eliminate various forms of discrimination against women that are rooted in age-old cultural traditions as well as in political and economic structures and processes. Women’s equal right to opportunities and benefits, as well as their right to freedom from harm and abuse like domestic battery, rape, female genital mutilation, child marriage and female infanticide, is now fully recognized and enshrined in international and national legal instruments.

The improvement of women’s status is a key to the promotion of children’s rights and welfare. There is robust empirical evidence now from all over the world that shows how women’s access to better economic, social and political benefits and opportunities on one hand, and gender fairness in share of parental responsibilities, on the other hand, enhance the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children.¹ UNICEF reports:

Because women are the primary caregivers for children, women’s well-being contributes to the well-being of their offspring. Healthy, educated and empowered women are more likely to have healthy, educated and confident daughters and sons. Women’s autonomy, defined as the ability to control their own lives and to participate in making decisions that affect them and their families, is associated with child nutrition. Other aspects of gender equality, such as education levels among women, also correlate with improved outcomes for children’s survival and development.

By upholding women’s human rights, societies also protect girl children and

female adolescents. Gender equality means that boys and girls have equal access to food, health care, education and opportunities. Evidence has shown that women, whose rights are fulfilled, are more likely to ensure that girls have access to adequate nutrition, health-care, education and protection from harm.²

This paper discusses the recent initiatives of the global community and different sectors of Philippine society, particularly the government and civil society groups, to address the gender biases in various spheres of life and to advance women’s participation in development. It also identifies persistent and emerging gender issues that are closely linked to the changes in the political and economic conditions both worldwide and locally; they are issues that, if not decisively and immediately resolved, will have far-reaching implications on the future of various sectors of Philippine society, particularly the children and young people.

The Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, 2000-2025, or what is more commonly known as Child 21, provides the blueprint on how to respect, protect and promote the human rights of Filipino children. Anchored on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC), Child 21 envisions that by the year 2025, the Filipino child will live, learn and grow in an enabling environment, free from all forms of discrimination and political as well and economic instabilities in the country. A major barrier to the promotion of children’s welfare is the persistence of old and emerging forms of gender issues.

Country Initiatives to Address Gender Issues

Despite many economic and political constraints, the Philippines has pursued various gender equality programs in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and following the action plans of the Women’s World Conferences in Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). CEDAW, which was ratified by the Philippine

government in 1981, and has been signed also by 181 other countries; it consists of a preamble and thirty articles that call for the following State actions: (a) the incorporation of gender equality principles in the legal system; (b) repeal of all discriminatory laws and the passage of those that prohibit discrimination against women; and (c) the establishment of mechanisms like tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the protection of women against discrimination.³

The 1987 amendments to the Philippine Constitution included provisions that underscore the country's recognition of the need to promote equality between the sexes and to advance the rights of marginalized groups, especially ethnic minorities and the poor, toward development and quality of life.

In its capacity as a policymaking body under the Office of the Philippine President, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW)⁴ was strengthened in the early eighties to address gender issues through policy as well as organizational and program development. Subsequently, it embarked on the process of integrating the Gender and Development (GAD) approach into government policies, plans, programs, and structures. It is translated in operational language in the 30-year Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development that was adopted in 1994. The main thrust of this strategic gender plan is to eventually eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in Philippine society and enable them to actively participate in development.

The NCRFW is presently headed by a policymaking body composed of 24 representatives from national line agencies (e.g., Departments of Health, Social Welfare and Development, and Interior and Local Government) and non-government organizations working in the areas of labor, media, youth, peasants, elderly and disabled, business, education, and indigenous communities. The active participation of women's groups and women's studies practitioners from the academe in the policymaking and program development functions of the Commission has been instrumental in making the bureaucracy

more gender responsive and sensitive to women's issues and concerns.

Over the last decade, the Philippine government has pursued the goal of gender equality by working in the 12 areas of concern embodied in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). These include, among others, the promotion of women's economic empowerment, protection and fulfillment of women's human rights and promotion of gender-responsive governance.⁵ Analytical tools for program planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation have been developed and widely disseminated to all government agencies. These are supplemented by guidelines for the preparation of gender plans and utilization of gender budgets. There has been continuous training as well of government officials and personnel in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government to ensure the gender responsiveness of their work.

The efforts of the executive branch of government to address the gender dimensions of economic, political and social issues in the country was supported by different enabling laws and policies. These include the Women and Nation Building Act (1994) which establishes the principles of women's participation in national development and those that protect women from rape, domestic abuse, sex slavery and labor trafficking. The Philippines is among the few countries in the world which requires the allocation of at least five percent of government agency funds to address gender issues. For women in the labor force, there are now laws that provide for credit to those engaged in micro and cottage industries and guard against gender discrimination in the hiring and termination of employees. There is also the legislation establishing the family courts and the women's and child desks in all police stations that now expedite the resolution of cases involving abused women and children.

The passage of the aforementioned laws has paved the way for the establishment of various programs and services to support the needs of women. There are presently crisis counseling services, temporary shelters, one-stop-shop medico-legal facilities, and women's desks at police stations to attend

Box 1: Laws to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights

RA 7192,	“Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1991” The law provides equal opportunity to women in all military schools and equal rights in entering into contracts and loan agreements and in joining social and cultural clubs.
RA 7845,	“General Appropriations Act of 1995” The law provides that a certain percentage of the appropriations for government agencies be earmarked for gender and development.
RA 7882,	“An Act Providing Assistance to Women Engaging in Micro and Cottage Business Enterprises, and for Other Purposes, 1995.” Provides assistance to women engaged or wanting to engage in micro and cottage industries.
RA 7941,	“Party-List System Act of 1995” The Act provides for the election of party-list representatives through the party-list system, including the women sector.
RA 8171,	“An Act Providing for the Repatriation of Filipino Women who have lost their Philippine Citizenship by Marriage to Aliens and of Natural-Born Filipinos, 1995.”
RA 7877,	“Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995” The law declares sexual harassment in the employment, education or training environment as unlawful.
RA 8353,	“The Anti-Rape Law of 1997” The law considers rape as a crime against persons and broadens the definition of rape to include sexual assault; it recognizes marital rape.
RA 8505,	“Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998” The law mandates the establishment of a rape crisis center in every province with counseling and free legal and other services for the victim.
RA 8972,	“Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000.” The law provides for social development and welfare services for solo parents and their children.
RA 9208,	“Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2003.” The law aims to eliminate trafficking in persons especially women and children and to ensure their recovery, rehabilitation and integration into the mainstream of society.
RA 9262,	“The Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004.” The law protects women against intimate partner abuse, accepts the “battered women syndrome” as valid defense in court and provides for temporary and permanent protection orders at the barangay level.

to the needs of victims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Lately, both government and non-government organizations have also stepped up their efforts to provide especially poor women with skills to improve their income-earning capacity (e.g., through micro-finance and micro-enterprise programs) and medical and health services (e.g., primary health care, health and social insurance schemes, day care centers). In response to challenges posed by women's entry into the labor force, various government agencies have introduced policies and programs to harmonize parenting and home care roles with paid work.

Academics in Women's/Gender Studies, for their part, have tried to influence their schools to institute gender studies programs, establish services to address gender/women's issues in education, and produce a new generation of non-sexist literature for use in teaching, policy advocacy, and research. The Women's Studies Association of the Philippines, a national organization of feminist scholars and women's studies faculty, presently coordinates the production of feminist literature and the provision of technical assistance in gender training and research for government and civil society groups. In 2002 the Association

had 64 institutional (i.e., colleges and universities) and more than 300 individual members.⁶ Its membership has gradually increased since then with the participation of more schools from the regions in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Some Positive Trends and Outcomes of Actions to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights

The gains from the foregoing initiatives are encouraging. For instance, there has been an increase over the years in the number of female participation in education. Recent data (2006-2007) from the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women⁷ show that more girls (67.35%) than boys (58.79%) were able to complete their primary education. At the secondary level, there was even a higher completion rate of females (61.87%) than males (48.39%). There were also more females who finished their tertiary education during the academic year 2006-2007.

The country's ranking in the Gender and Empowerment Measure (GEM) reflects the positive outcomes of initiatives aimed at attaining the goal of gender equality. It ranked 28th out of 116 countries in 1995; 46th out of 64 countries in 2001, and 35th out of 70 countries in 2004. In 2007, the Philippines ranked 6th out of 129 countries worldwide.

The gender gap in women's participation across various professional fields has narrowed as well in recent years. Women are better represented now in professions that used to be male-dominated like agriculture, engineering and law. Males, on the other hand, are increasingly entering what used to be female-dominated professions like health service and teaching. All these developments augur well for the future of Filipino children since they reflect the continuous decline in gender stereotyping of roles.

Table 1: Changing Status of Filipino Females and Males

Indicators	1990	2000	2003	2004	2005
Life Expectancy at Birth	-	-	67.2	67.5	65.0
Male			70.5	72.8	71.0
Female					
Adult Literacy Rate	93.1	92.5	92.5	94.4	-
Male	92.0	95.7	93.9	95.7	-
Female					
Net Enrollment Ratio	-	92.1	113.0 (2002)	-	-
In Primary School		93.3	112.0 (2002)	-	-
Male					
Females					
In Secondary Schools		48	-	-	-
Males		57	-	-	-
Females					

Source: ASEAN Statistical Pocketbook, 2006. <http://www.asean.org/13100.htm>

Persistent and Emerging Gender Issues

Despite the aforementioned gains in efforts to advance women's welfare in the country, especially the implementation of measures against gender-based violence and discrimination, serious gender issues persist in the country. Patriarchal beliefs and practices, rigid structures of class and ethnic inequality, and the many destabilizing effects of globalization continue to slow down the aforementioned development efforts. Unless decisive and sustained measures are taken to address these issues, the situation of succeeding generations of Filipinos, of both girls and boys, will not be as bright as currently hoped for. The serious challenges at present include the persistence of gender inequality in decision making, the prevalence of gender-based violence across classes and ethno-linguistic groups all over the country, and the continuing feminization of overseas labor migration.

Gender Inequality in Decision Making. The significant improvement in female access to education and employment has had very little effect on the extent of their participation in top-level decision making roles, both in politics and governance. Filipino women were given suffrage and the right to run for public office in 1939. In the last 64 years, however, very few (i.e., an annual average of 10% of all elective posts) won in elections and assumed key leadership roles in the government's judiciary and executive branches (Silvestre, 2001, p.1). Data for 2007 show that females occupy only 21 percent of the 240 seats in the House of Congress, 29 percent of all positions in the first and second level courts, and 5 out of 15 seats in the Supreme Court.⁸ It must be noted, however, that the middle level positions—the technical teams operating the bureaucracy—are composed of highly educated women; they occupy 74 percent of all second-level career service positions⁹. There are slightly more females (58% of the 2.32 million employees) working in the executive branch of government. They dominate the technical or second-level positions, while the men are either in skilled (e.g., clerk, driver) or in managerial/executive posts.¹⁰

Various cultural, political, and economic factors—both personal and structural in nature—continue to impede Filipino women's full and meaningful participation in politics and governance. Among these factors are the persistence of sexist beliefs and practices in both the domestic and public spheres, a male-centered ("macho") political culture, women's lack of skills and motivation to assume leadership roles, and inadequate support to enable them to enter politics and effectively perform their work. Then there are the real and imagined differences and tensions within and among the hundred women's groups and dozens of issue-based coalitions. Very often, these differences get in the way of influencing political parties and the electorate to advance women's political and economic interests.

Beyond the issue of female representation in decision making is the bigger problem of engaging Philippine politics to respond to women's needs and interests. As past experiences show, increasing female representation in public leadership may not directly and immediately help promote women's concerns. Women leaders have to be sensitized and encouraged to put on the gender lens, so to speak, and in so doing use their power and influence to support pro-women policies, mechanisms, and programs.

Domestic Violence and Other Forms of Abuse Against Women and Children. Inequality in decision making between women and men may be seen as both the cause and the effect of the prevalence of gender-based violence in Philippine society. Its most common forms are wife battering, rape, sexual molestation, sex trafficking and economic neglect.¹¹ Records of the Philippine National Police show that wife battering was the most prevalent form of abuse against women from 1999-2006, accounting for more than half (58.5%) of all reported cases. This is followed by cases of rape (14.7%) and acts of lasciviousness (9.4%).¹² The 2008 gender assessment report of donor agencies notes that there were 9,197 reported cases of child abuse in 2005 and 7,606 cases in 2006. Seventy percent of the victims were girls and 40 percent were cases of sexual abuse (rape, incest and acts of lasciviousness) as well as sexual exploitation (child prostitution, pedophilia, and pornography).¹³

It is worth noting that the number of reported cases of abuse against women and children has declined over the past eight years. However, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women claims that such trend does not imply a decrease of cases. It is more likely the result of under-reporting, due to ineffective documentation processes and mechanisms, and the lack of access of victims to enabling legal and social support and information. Many victims, especially young females, are afraid to report the crime because of shame and fear of retaliation by the offender who may be the father, brother or spouse. It is most likely, therefore, that the actual incidence of violence against women and children is far higher than what the records show.

The effects of physical and sexual abuse especially on children are often serious and detrimental to their physical, intellectual and emotional health. Studies show that young victims either drop out from school or are unable to perform their studies well; they are prone to physical and emotional ailments and often cannot relate well with friends and peers. Children who witnessed abuse in the household are likely to become abusers themselves later in life.¹⁴ Mothers who experience physical and emotional abuse, on the other hand, are often unable to take care for their children and effectively perform their social and economic roles. They are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, eating problems, sexual dysfunction, and reproductive health problems like unwanted pregnancy, miscarriage, and even HIV infection.¹⁵

Lack of Access to Reproductive Health Information and Services.

An equally serious problem especially of poor women in the Philippines is their lack of access to reproductive health information and services. Poverty combines with such factors as poor health-seeking behavior of both women and men and inadequate government health services to account for the slow decline of maternal mortality rates and emergency obstetric cases. They are also responsible for the slow but steady increase in the incidence of HIV infection in the country.

Despite the country's adherence, therefore, to the Millennium Development Goals to improve maternal health through reduction of maternal mortality ratio, to reduce child mortality rate and to halt the spread of HIV infection, very little progress has been attained to realize these goals. The repeated failure of the legislative branch of government to enact the reproductive health bill has remained a major barrier to full and regular access, especially by the poor, to contraceptives and family planning information and services. Frequent and many pregnancies and childbirths have a negative impact not only on women's health but also on the chances of survival of infants. They increase the risks of maternal mortality and childbirth complications. At present, maternal deaths in the country make up 14 percent of all deaths in women aged 15-49. The data show that 25 percent of maternal deaths were caused by hypertension (13%), postpartum hemorrhage (8%), and complications of unsafe abortion (4%), while the rest is simply classified as "other complications."¹⁶ Moreover, a study revealed that although considered illegal in the Philippines, there were 430,000 induced abortions in 2000.¹⁷

The comparative data on population characteristics of Southeast Asian countries in Table 2 show that the Philippines continues to lag behind Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and Thailand in reducing mortality risks due to maternal causes and infant mortality rate. The maternal mortality rate has declined very slowly (1.4%) since the 1990s, "when the Philippines was listed among the 42 countries contributing to 90 percent of maternal deaths worldwide."¹⁸ To achieve the Millennium Development Goals' target of 52 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015, the Joint Gender Country Assessment report argues that the Philippines must reduce its maternal mortality rate by at least seven percent annually.¹⁹

The 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey found that 61 percent of currently married women do not want additional children and their desired fertility rate is only 2.5 children, one child less than the current fertility rate of 3.5 children average fertility. Moreover, the proportion of unwanted births increased from 18 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2003. The 2004 Pulse

Table 2: Population Characteristics of Southeast Asian Countries

Indicators	Population Mid-2008 (millions)	Births per 100,000 population	Infant Mortality Rate	Female Lifetime Risk of Dying from Maternal Causes	Total Fertility Rate	% of Population Under-nourished 2002-2004
Brunei	0.4	19	7	2,900	2.0	4
Cambodia	14.7	26	67	48	3.5	33
Indonesia	239.9	21	34	97	2.6	6
Laos	5.9	34	70	33	4.5	19
Malaysia	27.7	21	9	500	2.6	3
Myanmar	49.2	19	70	110	2.2	5
Philippines	90.5	26	25	140	3.3	18
Singapore	4.8	11	2.4	6,200	1.4	-
Thailand	66.1	13	16	500	1.6	22
Timor-Leste	1.1	42	88	35	6.7	9
Vietnam	86.2	17	16	280	2.1	16

Source: ASEAN Statistical Pocketbook, 2006. <http://www.asean.org/13100.htm>

Asia Survey likewise showed that 97 percent of all Filipinos believe that it is important to have the ability to control one's fertility or plan one's family. Most of the survey respondents (82%) are Roman Catholics. What these data suggest, therefore, is that Filipinos generally favor full access to information and services that can promote reproductive health.

Other than the problem of maternal and infant mortality are the equally serious problems of unwanted and early pregnancies, closely spaced pregnancies, unsafe termination of pregnancy and abortion complications. These problems are coupled by the inability of duty holders to provide appropriate and adequate sexuality and reproductive health information to male and female adolescents. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to maternal death. Young mothers especially from poor families often give up their schooling, thereby, limiting their opportunities for regular and higher- paid jobs.

The results of the 2002 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study indicate that a substantial number of young people, who now account for 18.2 million or one-fifth of the national population, are sexually active. They had their sexual debut at the average age of 18.2 years for males and 18.9 years for females. The survey noted that early sexual activity

by young people is strongly associated with poor access to reproductive health information and services.

The resistance of certain sectors, particularly of some faith-based organizations, to institutionalize and vigorously pursue sexuality education in the country and provide modern family planning services especially to the poor will not prevent young people from being sexually active. On the contrary it will put them at greater risk of having unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion. Indeed, all these issues, if not decisively resolved by the government, will continue to pose serious threats to women's health. Such problems will continue to hamper their capacity to perform various domestic, economic and social roles and responsibilities. As previously mentioned, women who have control over their fertility and decide on the size of their family are better able to attend to their own personal well-being as well as to the needs of their children and other family members.

The slow but steady increase of reported cases of HIV infection in the Philippines in recent years should be examined for its gender dimensions. Although the Philippines is a low-HIV prevalence country, with less than 0.1 percent of the population estimated to be infected with the virus,

questions about the current manner of collecting and reporting incidences of infection raise some doubts about the accuracy of data. The HIV/AIDS Registry of the Department of Health shows that from 1984 to December 2007, there were 3,061 reported cases of HIV infection. Of this number, 2,279 were asymptomatic or in a stage of chronic infection and 782 were full-blown AIDS resulting in 307 recorded deaths since 1984. Heterosexual intercourse accounts for the majority (61%) of recorded cases, with more infected men (66.4%) than women (33.54%).

The male role in promoting the reproductive health of their sexual partner is important to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, Filipino men are more frequently engaged in sexually risky behavior than women²⁰ and resistant to the use of condoms both for family planning or preventing sexually transmitted infections. Only 9 percent of contraceptive use is male-dependent, with condom use accounting for only 1.6 percent, vasectomy 0.1 percent and withdrawal 7.3 percent.²¹

Epidemiological and cultural factors put women at greater risk of being infected. Females, particularly those of adolescent ages, are biologically more vulnerable to HIV because of their immature cervix and thinner mucous membrane, which get abraded during forced or dry intercourse. Their reproductive organ has a greater surface area of mucous membrane where the virus can enter. Then the semen of HIV positive men contains higher concentration of the virus than the vaginal fluids of HIV positive women. Cultural and economic factors likewise combine and expose women to untreated STIs, thereby, increasing ten times their risk of being infected.²²

The progression from being HIV positive to having AIDS is faster for girls compared to males in many South and Southeast Asian countries because of the higher incidences of malnutrition among females that results to the weakening of the immune system. Gender norms and cultural practices like greater public tolerance of male infidelity in marriage or involvement in multiple sexual partners, regardless of civil status, also predispose females to STIs, including HIV infection.

Feminization of Overseas Employment. In the early seventies, women constituted only 12 percent of the total number of overseas foreign workers. Their number dramatically increased to 27 percent in 1987, 65 percent in 2003, and 50 percent in November 2007.²³

The 2006 Survey on Overseas Filipinos conducted by the National Statistics Office estimated a total of 1.52 million Overseas Filipino Workers deployed all over the world during the period April to September 2006. This number was 14.3 percent higher than the previous year's estimate of 1.33 million OFWs.²⁴ The 2006 data (Table 3) from the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency show that women were largely deployed as service workers and in the professional, medical and technical fields. Majority of those in the service sector were deployed as domestic workers and did not enjoy the labor rights and benefits given to those in the other sectors.

Of the 1.52 million OFWs, 764,000 or 50.4 percent were females; their number increased by 15.8 percent from the 2005 figure of 660,000. Female overseas workers were generally younger than their male counterparts. Around 43.5 percent of them were aged 15 to 29. The males, on the other hand, were evenly distributed across the different age groups.

The continuous increase in the number of female overseas workers is attributed to two factors—the growth in demand of countries for their skills in domestic work, health care, child minding and club entertainment, and the lack of job opportunities in the country. In recent years, there has also been a steady increase in number of married female overseas workers and those with lower educational status. In short, more wives and mothers now leave their families behind and in many cases become the main income earners.

Some studies²⁵ underscore the positive effects on the national economy and on households of overseas labor migration. They show how the earnings of overseas workers have been used for the education of children, the purchase or repair of the house, and access to better health

services. They also point to how remittances have helped keep the local economy stay afloat, so to speak, and withstand the Asian financial crises in recent times. Indeed, remittances have played an important role in stabilizing the country's economy. The incomes brought into the country by overseas migrant workers have helped reduce and ease the incidence, depth and severity of poverty by supporting household expenditures, the local community through social capital and the creation of multiplier effects,²⁶ and the economy by preventing the rapid decline in value of the local currency.

However, the economic benefits of overseas migration must be closely examined in relation to its effects both on the safety and security of the overseas workers themselves and of the families, especially the children, they leave behind. The 2006 survey conducted by the Action for Health Initiative (ACHIEVE) on the health status and needs of female overseas domestic workers shows their vulnerability to many forms of work-related abuses and health problems. These problems include the violation of their labor contracts, sexual and physical abuse, emotional and mental health issues, and reproductive health risks including HIV

Table 3 : Deployment of Newly Hired OFWs by Skills Category, 2006

Skill Category	Female	Male	Total
Professional, Medical & Technical Workers	24,046	17,212	41,258
Administrative & Managerial Workers	289	528	817
Clerical Workers	4,641	3,271	7,912
Sales Workers	3,112	2,405	5,517
Service Workers	128,186	16,135	144,321
Agricultural Workers	91	716	808
Production Workers	23,344	80,240	103,584
For reclassification	745	3,161	3,906
TOTAL	184,454	123,668	308,122

(Source: POEA, 2006. <http://www.poea.gov.ph> , accessed November 15, 2007).

**Table 4: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Filipino Workers
By Age Group and by Sex: 2005**

Skill Category	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Philippines (Number in thousands)	1,327	667	660
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
15 – 24	11.4	7.4	15.5
25 – 29	23.5	18.6	28.4
30 – 34	19.4	19.4	19.4
35 – 39	15.7	16.3	15.1
40 – 44	13.0	16.2	9.7
45 and over	17.0	22.1	12.0

Source: National Statistics Office, 2005

infection. The survey respondents also mentioned the following problems: (a) poor working conditions, (b) delayed payment of salary (c) deteriorating relationship with their husbands and children, and (d) physical abuse by their employers.²⁷

What are the effects on children of the absence of overseas working parents, especially the mothers? Social scientists, healthcare providers and development workers have, of late, called public attention to the immediate and long-term detrimental effects on children and family relations of overseas labor migration. For instance the survey conducted by Battistela and Conaco in 1997 of 709 children (between ages 9 and 15 and between Grades 4 and 6) in 39 schools in Metro Manila and the nearby provinces showed that the “absence of the mother has the most disruptive effect in the life of the children.”²⁸ They further noted that “mother-absent children tend to be more angry, more confused, more apathetic, more afraid and to feel more different from other children” who live with both parents.²⁹ The school grades and classroom ranks of those children with one or both parents absent were below those with both parents present. The mother-absent children, according to the authors, performed the least well in school.

The groundbreaking research of Pingol on changing notions of masculinity by men whose wives work abroad speaks of the very weak bond established between a long-distance mother and her children, especially if the separation started when the latter were still very young.³⁰

The claims about the economic benefits derived from remittances by families left behind are also challenged by studies that present contrary data. Añonuevo,³¹ for example, points to “husbands’ joblessness and total dependence on their wives’ earnings” as one of the reasons for the low level of household savings and investment for productive purposes. Husbands either stop working once their wives start sending money either because they have to assume the tasks of household management and child care or lose interest in working since the family is already assured of regular financial support. Then there are anecdotal reports of lavish spending by families left behind. The phrase “*ubos biyaya*,” according to Añonuevo,³² is used by migrants to refer to “lavish spending on birthdays, weddings, graduations, fiestas and other

occasions”; and it “literally means to pour out all the blessings until there is nothing left.”³³ Other studies point to the tendency of some families left behind to “overspend,” or incur unnecessary debts in anticipation of the money that would be sent to them. Some males who receive remittances from their wives or children are known to use the hard-earned incomes of the latter on vices like gambling and alcohol drinking or by having an illicit affair.³⁴

A study of the constructions or notions of long-distance mothering highlights the role of “guilt feelings” in influencing the remittance behavior of women. Because traditional and ideal constructions of femininity are tied to mothering practices that require day-to-day physical and emotional care of children, some married female migrant workers compensate for their absence by sending money and material goods, sometimes even more than what their children need, and at the expense of their personal well-being.³⁵ The author notes:

Long-distance mothering, in the words of several women, also “means having to contend with very strong feelings of guilt.” Why and when do they feel guilty? The answers were many and varied. Frantic calls from home about a child being rushed to the hospital, meeting an accident or dropping out of school, were moments of intense self blaming. Being away from home during their children’s “rites of passage” and emergency situations were also occasions for “guilt tripping.”³⁶

Ferraren³⁷ also highlights other social costs of migration and the serious challenge of putting remittance income to more productive purposes. She claims that overseas labor migration has caused the breakup of families as well as an increase in the incidence of marital infidelity, juvenile delinquency, early marriage and pregnancy and the like. She adds:

Only a very small proportion of remitted funds seem to go into income-earning, job creating investment and property acquisition. Remittances may not constitute a rising tide that raises

all boats, but they do have a very important effect on the standard of living of the households that receive them, constituting a significant portion of household income. They represent the most important social safety net of poor families, especially in times of disasters or difficult times. Far from being productive, remittances increase inequality, encourage consumption of imports, increase domestic prices for education and health and create dependency.³⁸

A recently published study by UNICEF³⁹ validates the findings of aforementioned studies on the detrimental effects of OFW parents on children left behind. It notes that “many children of OFWs aged 13-16 appear to be worse off than children of non-OFWs of the same age. Some receive less than the average money inputs, but all receive less than the average adult attention.”⁴⁰ And while the increase in access to money of the children of OFWs also increases the degree to which they feel “satisfied,” they tend to value adult attention more than money. Another significant finding of the study is the vulnerability of children of OFWs to psychosocial problems caused by families splitting up.

Conclusion

The achievement of the Child 21 goals and targets will depend on the extent to which the Philippine government, in collaboration with various stakeholders, will be able to resolve the gender issues that impede the capacity of females to ably perform their roles and responsibilities to their family and community. While enabling laws and programs are now in place, there is a need to fully enforce and implement them. Given the multiple roles that women now assume both in the private and public spheres, it is important to continue the current efforts of advocating for the equal sharing of power, duties and responsibilities over child care and the management as well as utilization of family/household resources and opportunities.

The prevalence of domestic violence, sex trafficking and sexual abuse especially of young females and even males is very serious. There is a need for concerted efforts to eliminate the problems in order to ensure the emotional and physical well-being of Filipino children. But the elimination of gender discrimination must go hand in hand with measures to reduce the incidence of poverty in the country. This can be achieved through the vigorous promotion of viable income-generating opportunities especially in the rural areas. These opportunities should be geared to women who, because of lack of work in the country, have to seek employment abroad as domestic helpers and caregivers.

Inasmuch as the gender issues mentioned here disproportionately affect poor women, current policies and programs to eliminate poverty must adopt gender-responsive and rights-based strategies. The United Nations Development Fund for Women strongly advocates for the integration of gender equality targets in all of the eight Millennium Development Goals. It proposes that in order for countries like the Philippines to halve between 1990 to 2015 the number of poor people, there is a need to adopt the following measures: (a) make macroeconomic policies pro-poor, gender-responsive and rights-based, (b) improve the gender-responsiveness of poverty statistics, (c) invest in timesaving infrastructure, especially in rural areas and poor communities, (d) increase women's access to paid employment, (e) increase women's access to land, credit and other resources, and (f) enhance women's capacity to participate in decision-making, governance and development work.⁴¹ To reach the MDG goals of reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters and child mortality by two-thirds in 2015, UNIFEM proposes the greater involvement of men and communities in health education on pregnancy and childbirth and improved access of women to transportation, infrastructure and communications. It also calls on government to provide free and easily accessible reproductive health services especially to poor women.



Endnotes

- ¹ Upwards of 70 percent across the broad regions and socioeconomic classes, according to Pulse Asia and SWS surveys over the past several years, as will be elaborated below.
- ² A foremost exponent of the contrarian view was the late Julian Simon whose book (1977) focuses on the positive externalities of population growth in a very long-run perspective.
- ³ Some economists, however, argue that such negative effect should not be a concern, as parents may be fully aware of the private and social costs of children and yet would rather have more children than consume more goods or services – the notion of consumer sovereignty. Hence, even though it hampers economic growth, rapid population growth may be socially optimal (Lee, 1991).
- ⁴ It is interesting that the pace of the country's population growth deceleration corresponded to the relative waxing and waning of its population program (Orbeta and Pernia, 1999; Herrin and Pernia, 2003).
- ⁵ The likelihood of a population undercount during the 2007 Census should be noted, based on reports that enumerators had difficulty accessing depressed areas owing to the fear of residents that the census was being undertaken as part of a government plan to relocate squatters to give way to infrastructure projects. Hence, a current population growth rate of 2.1 percent rather than 2.04 percent is probably more realistic.
- ⁶ TFR is the number of births a woman would have on average at the end of her reproductive life if she were subject to the prevailing age-specific fertility rates throughout her reproductive years (15-49).
- ⁷ These are official poverty-incidence numbers from respective government statistical agencies, as reported in ADB (2007). Poverty incidence is defined as the proportion of the population below a government-set poverty line. Household poverty incidence – which has recently been the preferred indicator of the Philippine government – is, by definition, lower.
- ⁸ It should be noted that the above estimates are pure demographic effects and, hence, conservative as they do not fully capture the population-economy-poverty-reduction interaction effects.
- ⁹ “In the 2003 NDHS, women were asked a series of questions about each child born in the preceding five years and any current pregnancy, to determine whether the pregnancy was wanted then, wanted at a later time, or unwanted...The danger of rationalization is present; an unwanted conception may well have become a cherished child... Respondents are willing to report unwanted conceptions, although some postpartum rationalization probably occurs. The result is probably an underestimate of unwanted fertility.” (NSO, 2004, p. 100).
- ¹⁰ By contrast, overall CPR in Thailand and Indonesia has been around 70 percent.
- ¹¹ Note that the “undecideds” range from 16 percent to 28 percent.
- ¹² Note that birth spacing is about the only measure that President Arroyo favors; however, without an effective family planning program, even that is meaningless lip service.
- ¹³ Reinforcing the positive results of earlier surveys on population and family planning, in general, as shown, for example, in Table 10 above, the most recent (September-October 2008) SWS survey results show very strong support among Catholics and non-Catholics alike for the RH bill, including the specific provision on sexuality education in public and private upper-primary and high schools.

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Introduction: Cultural Diversity

That cultural diversity is a fact of life is not debatable. Today, a homogenous population would be difficult to find. One of the strongest forces that contribute to cultural diversity is the increasing rate of international migration which has doubled since the 1970s. According to the 2000 International Migration Report, every 10 persons in the developed regions are migrants (UNESCO Cultural Sector, 2008). While diversity due to migration occurs in developed countries, different ethnicities amongst native populations cause diversity in many parts of the world. Whether cultural diversity is due to migration or different ethnicities among native populations, these situations have produced social tensions and at times open conflict.

Concern over cultural diversity produced, in November 2, 2001, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the 31st Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris. In his address, Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO's Director General, stated that it "raises cultural diversity to the level of the common heritage of humanity" and "aims both to preserve cultural diversity as a living and thus renewable treasure that must not be perceived as being unchanging but as a process of guaranteeing the survival of society."

The Declaration has 12 Articles distributed under the following headings: Identity, Diversity and Pluralism, Cultural Diversity and Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Creativity, Cultural Diversity and International Solidarity. These principles highlight the importance of cultural diversity as a key to sustainable human development, so its preservation, protection, and promotion depend on enlightened public policies that uphold fundamental freedoms and arrived at after due consultation or dialogue with all concerned parties.

Cultural diversity takes different forms in different settings. It may be associated with racial, ethnic or religious differences. In the Philippines, ethnic and religious diversities are true amongst the majorities and the minorities. The form of diversity focused in this Report, however, has to do with cultural minorities now known as Indigenous Peoples or

IPs. These groups have resisted colonialism and have retained their identities and culture in spite of the homogenizing force of national policies and majority cultures.

Indeed, indigenous peoples' experience with colonialism has largely defined the nature and character of cultural diversity in the Philippines. It created a cultural divide between majority and minority, resulting in the lack of development or underdevelopment of the latter. The UN Declaration of Cultural Diversity cited earlier is supposed to open more options for all people and lead to a more holistic development, to wit:

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity declares:

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

The challenge of this new perception on cultural diversity as "the common heritage of humanity" is slowly gaining ground, as more and more organizations and institutions focus their attention on the plight of groups who have much to gain in the light of these new perceptions. Therefore, it is important to know who these people are and their locations in this country.

Who are the Indigenous Peoples?

Magnarella (2005) claims that there is no international definition of "peoples" but that the term generally describes a population sharing certain characteristics such as: a common historical tradition; self-identity as a distinctive cultural or ethnic group; cultural homogeneity; a shared language; a shared religion; and a traditional territorial connection (p.126).

In his Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Population, Jose Martinez Cobo, the UN Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission

on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, used a working definition that goes this way (in Magnarella, 2005):

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems. (1986: para.379/ p. 126.)

The UN Working Group on Indigenous Population defines indigenous peoples as (ibid):

The disadvantaged descendants of those peoples that inhabited a territory prior to the formation of a state. The term indigenous may be defined as a characteristic relating the identity of a particular people to a particular area and distinguishing them culturally from other people or peoples. When, for example, immigrants from Europe settled in the Americas and Oceania, or when new states were created after colonialism was abolished in Africa and Asia, certain peoples became marginalized and discriminated against, because their language, their religion, their culture and their whole way of life were different and perceived by the dominant society as being inferior. Insisting on their right to self-determination is indigenous peoples' way of overcoming these obstacles. (1996: para .35/ p 126)

The main difference between indigenous peoples and minorities is that the latter does not constitute a "first people," referring to the Indigenous Peoples' continued territorial occupation and attachment

to their lands before conquest and occupation by others (ibid, p.127).

In the Philippines, the term Indigenous Peoples, often shortened to IPs, is new. After independence, the term used was National Cultural Minorities, then National Minorities, then Cultural Communities in 1973. Further changes appeared in the 1987 Constitution which introduced not only the term Indigenous Cultural Communities but also the term Bangsamoros referring to the Muslims in the country. The distinction between the Indigenous Communities (referring to tribal groups) and the Bangsamoros (Muslims) is stressed by the usage of these terms. For this reason, a similar distinction will be adopted in this paper.

However, changes in terminologies did not seem to have affected the status of the indigenous peoples created during the colonial period. Atty. Evelyn S. Dunuan, speaking at the Asian Regional Consultation on Poverty Reduction in 2001, noted that the term Indigenous Peoples has been "made synonymous to oppression, exploitation, discrimination and poverty. They, whose ancestors were once the proud rulers of this land, are now the scum of the earth, the so-called poorest of the poor in the Philippines." This observation points to the neglect, often described as "benign," that has produced this condition.

How did this happen?

A short review of events is useful in understanding the transformation of Indigenous Peoples from being free to being oppressed. During the Spanish regime, Indigenous Peoples were known as pagano (pagans) or infiles in contrast to those who became Christians. The *paganos* occupied a much lower niche in the social order which can be remedied by becoming Christians and joining the favored status as loyal subjects of the King. The Americans further emphasized the differences of identities and status by tagging the population as either "civilized" (Christian) or "wild"(non-Christian). Again the marker for civilization is Christianity.

Included in the category of "wild" were the Islamized natives in Mindanao and Sulu whom the Spaniards identified as Moros.. The word Moro

was a Spanish derivative of the word Moriscos, descendants of the Moors who ruled Spain for eight centuries. The word, therefore, carried a wealth of meaning that neatly boxed the Moros as the “enemy.”

The inherent bias obvious in these distinctions was not lost to persons so identified and treated as such. These categories with their underlying negative connotations entered into policies, laws and governmental structures, like the creation of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes and the enactment of the Special Government Act for the provinces occupied by non-Christian groups such as Benguet, Nueva Viscaya, Lepanto-Bontoc, Palawan and Mindoro. In 1903, the Moro Province was created with special features like Tribal Wards and Tribal Courts. The latter was intended to apply the general laws of the colonial government because “the customary laws of the Moros and Non-Christians were either non-existent or so vague and whimsical as to be impracticable of administration in courts of justice” (Rodil, 2004, pp. 25-26). This highly superior tone usually pervades many of the dealings between the colonial regimes and the Indigenous Peoples and soon became embedded in the consciousness of the general populace long after the colonials had gone.

The colonial dictates were particularly disastrous to the Indigenous Peoples and Moros as regards land ownership, its distribution as well as the disposition of its natural resources. The Spaniards introduced the Regalian Doctrine which gives the Crown or the Spanish king ownership of the land and the authority to dispose of it. The Americans then institutionalized the Torrens System of land titling which required the registration and titling of privately owned lands. The Indigenous Peoples’ concept of communal land ownership and free access to its natural resource and the Moros’ concept of land as inalienable and ancestral legacies were obviously in conflict with these foreign systems.

The series of land laws that followed from the American regime to the Commonwealth period hastened the dispossession of land from the Moros and Indigenous Peoples in three ways: 1) the requirement of registration was to be done in writing (in the English language), a skill

which Moros and IPs had not acquired; 2) the non-recognition of communal lands meant there was nothing to register; 3) homesteaders were allowed to acquire 16 then 24 hectares, while non-Christians were allowed only 10 hectares, later reduced by subsequent laws, to only four hectares (Rodil, pp.30-33).

Besides land laws and their negative effects on IP population including the Moros, the resettlement policy was equally devastating. Indigenous Peoples residing in places opened for resettlement programs like Cagayan Valley, Isabela, Nueva Viscaya, Nueva Ecija, Mindoro, Palawan, Negros, and Mindanao suffered further reduction of territory and diminution of status from majority to minority (Rodil, pp. 46-47) .

Some of the most significant programs identified by Rodil (pp. 46-47) are the following:

1. Establishing of agricultural colonies via Act No. 2254, passed by the Philippine Commission in 1913;
2. Act 2280 passed in 1919 by Manila;
3. The Quirino-Recto Act known as Act No. 4197, 1935;
4. The National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA) created by Commonwealth Act No. 441 in 1939;
5. The Rice and Corn Production Administration (RCPA) of 1949;
6. The Land Settlement Development Administration (LASEDECO);
7. The National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) of 1954;
8. Land Authority, 1963; and,
9. Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR).

Not only settlers but corporations, too, were making the trek to resettlement areas, as seen in the increasing logging and timber concessions. By 1979, there were 164 logging concessionaires mostly in Mindanao with a total area of 5,029,340 hectares. Leases of 25 years for pasturelands totaled 179,011.6 hectares by 1973 (Rodil, p. 49). This drove many indigenous groups to higher grounds and to further isolation and marginalization.

The dramatic shift in population as a result of these programs can be demonstrated in the case of Cotabato. In 1918, Muslims were majority in 20 towns, the Lumad in 5, and none for the migrants. By 1970, Muslims had 10 towns; Lumad none although 31 towns showed Lumad population at less than 10 per cent; the migrants now dominated 38 towns (Rodil, p. 48). This phenomenon was replicated in other areas in Mindanao.

Moros managed to retain some of their territories intact due to the resistance mounted by the sultanates against colonial invasions. But this did not stop their eventual minoritization and marginalization, as Moro provinces were divided into new political units dominated by settlers. In the end, Moros managed to hold on to only five provinces in which they were still the majority population.

Thus in the space of 60 years, the indigenous population was effectively reduced, marginalized, minoritized and often isolated and discriminated. In the words of Rudy Rodil (p. 16), “by an ironic twist of history, it was the unconquered and uncolonized who were later to become the cultural communities of the 20th century.”

The Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) identifies 110 indigenous groups in the Philippines distributed as follows: 48 or 43.64 percent in Luzon, 25 or 22.73 percent in Visayas, 37 or 33.63 percent in Mindanao (NCIP Info Kit). A delineation of the various groups made by the

Cordillera Peoples Alliance and posted at IWGIA website (www.iwgia.org) shows the following distribution:

Cordillera (Northern Luzon)

The various indigenous groups of the Cordillera (Northern Luzon) are collectively known as Igorot. The Tingguians, Isnego, Kalinga, Ifugao, Ibaloi, and Kankaney are distributed along the Cordillera mountain ranges.

Other groups like the Itawes (Itawit), Malaweg, Yogad, Gaddang/Gad’ang, Kalinga-Isabella, Isinay and Bugkalot (Ilongot) are found in the mountains, foothills and lowlands of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino provinces.

North, Central and Southern Luzon

The Negrito groups, of which 25 major groups have been identified, dominate the Tagalog and Bikol provinces. Reports of Negrito migration show one mainstream branching into three settlements. One group (Alta, Arta, Agta) settled along the northern part of Luzon moving along the Sierra Madre and Pacific coast down to the Bondoc and Bikol mountains. Another (Aete, Atta, Ita, Ati, Dumagat, Sinauna) settled in the western and southern regions in the Zambales-Bataan mountains and southern Tagalong foothills. Others (Batak) settled in Palawan, Panay, Negros and northern Mindanao (Mamanwa).

Visayas

Mindoro is the home of the Mangyan which are grouped into the Northern (Tadyawan, Alangan and Iraya) and Southern Mangyan (Buhid, Taobuid and Hanunuo). The Ratagnon, on the southern tip of the island, are related to the Cuyonin of Palawan.

Indigenous groups in Palawan are the Agutaynen, Tagbanwa (Kalamianen), Palaw’an, Molbog, Batak, and Tau’t Batu. Some groups like the Cuyonin, Agutaynen, Tagbanwa, and Kagayanen are considered to be fully assimilated.

Mindanao

Lumads

The Lumads are the non-Islamized groups in Mindanao and are clustered into the following:

- a) Manobo, b) Bagobo-B'laan-Tiboli-Tirutay, c) Mandaya-Mansaka, d) Subanen, and e) Mamanwa.

Lumad, a Cebuano Bisayan word meaning indigenous, is the collective name of 18 ethnolinguistic groups. This name was adopted in a congress held in June 1986. The choice of a Cebuano word was based on practicality since Cebuano was spoken by most of the groups (Rodil, 2004).

Bangsamoros or Moros

Bangsamoros refer to the 13 ethnolinguistic groups which had been Islamized. At present, majority belong to the ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) which constitutes the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, and Basilan, and the city of Marawi City. However, there are several barangays and municipalities of majority Moros outside ARMM.

The word Bangsamoro is a combination of Bangsa (nation) and Moro (from the Moors of Spain), a pejorative word used by the Spaniards but reclaimed by the MNLF to refer to the people who remained unconquered.

There appears to be a certain exclusivity in the claim to indigeniety since Bangsamoros are not usually regarded by the IPs as belonging to the Indigenous Peoples category. However, RA 8371 (the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act or IPRA) defines Indigenous Cultural Communities or Indigenous Peoples as:

1. A group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and

utilized such territories, sharing bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, become historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos.

2. ICCs/ IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been resettled outside their ancestral domain.

Clearly, these definitions include the Bangsamoros in the indigenous frame.

Population

The indigenous population is estimated to range from 6.5 million (National Commission on Culture and the Arts), 7.5 million (KAMP), to more than 12 million (NCIP), or between 10 and 15 percent of the total national population distributed as follows: 60 percent in Mindanao (Lumad), 30 percent in the Cordillera-Northern Luzon (Igorot), and 10 percent in the rest of Luzon and the Visayas. Data sources and varied group identities may explain different estimates (www.iwgia.org).

In 2000, the National Statistics Office (NSO) estimated the Bangsamoros to be 3.8 million and constitute 5 percent of the total population. However, the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) puts the count at 8.3 million and 10 percent of the population. OMA has proposed a joint survey with the NSO to avoid the accusation of “statistical genocide,” a claim that was once put forward by the Moro National Liberation Front or MNLF (Philippine Human Development Report, 2005).

Responses to Indigenous Peoples' Problems

A. National Laws: the 1987 Constitution

The struggle of the Bangsamoros and IPs for their rights brought about certain legal moves culminating in the institutionalization of these rights in the 1987 Constitution. This has significantly changed the map as far as the promotion of these rights are concerned (www.iwgia.org.)

Several Articles focused on these rights are as follows:

Article II, Sec. 22 (Declaration of Principles and State Policies). The State recognizes and promotes the rights of ICCs (indigenous cultural communities) "within the framework of national unity and development."

Article X (Autonomous Regions). Autonomy is granted to "provinces, cities, municipalities, and geographical areas sharing common and distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures, and other relevant characteristics." This provision explicitly applies to the Bangsamoro in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordillera people of the Mountain Province.

Article XII, Sec. 5 (National Economy and Patrimony). The State commits to protect the rights of the ICCs to their ancestral land, "subject to the provision of this Constitution and national development policies and programs." Congress was given the task of defining "the applicability of customary law governing property rights or relations in determining the ownership and extent of ancestral domain."

Article XIV Sec. 17 (Education, Science and Technology, Arts, Culture and Sport). The state recognizes and guarantees the rights of ICCs "to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions."

Article XVI Sec 12 (General Provisions).

Congress can create a consultative body to advise the President on policies affecting ICCs with members coming from ICCs.

For the Moros, the most significant provision was the creation of Regional Autonomy.

1. **ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao)**

The creation of an autonomous region in Mindanao was first made by Pres. Marcos through Presidential Decree 1618 in 1979, as a result of the Tripoli Agreement signed in 1976.

PD 1618 was supplanted by Republic Act 6734, the enabling act for regional autonomy. The Final Peace Agreement of 1996 signed between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) resulted in the amendment of RA 6734 by RA 9050 in 2001.

2. **CAR (Cordillera Administrative Region)**

Although regional autonomy included the Cordillera, voters there rejected the two Organic Acts for an autonomous region in plebiscites conducted in 1989 and 1998. The President then, through Executive Order 220, created a special structure known as the Cordillera Administrative Region. Observers note that this is "merely a faint ghost of the original vision of regional autonomy" (www.iwgia.org).

3. **IPRA**

RA 8371 known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) was passed by Congress in 1997. Its provisions are being implemented by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) particularly in identifying, and titling ancestral domain as well as other provisions such as the mechanism for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and the convening of a Consultative Body to advise the NCIP on problems, aspirations and interests of the indigenous peoples. The Consultative Body was to be organized at the provincial, regional

and national levels with representations from traditional leaders, elders women and youth.

B. International Laws

The United Nations has taken a strong interest and concern in the struggle of Indigenous Peoples. Apart from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other instruments, mechanisms, protocols have been passed and signed. The latest is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the General Assembly at the 107th Plenary Meeting on 13 September 2007. UNDRIP declares the recognition, protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples in all aspects of life.

Victoria Tauli-Corpus, chair, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, sums up the UNDRIP as follows (2008):

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples sets the international minimum standards for the protection, respect and fulfillment of the rights of indigenous peoples. While it is a declaration and is therefore not legally binding as conventions are, many of the articles are actually binding as these are lifted from the Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Declaration does not set new international standards on human rights. It merely interprets International Human Rights Law as it applies to the specific situation of indigenous peoples as distinct peoples.

This historical landmark has been made possible through the active participation and work of the international indigenous people's movement that started on the local level but became more organized in the 1960s and more delegations were sent to the UN.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important document for the protection of one of the most vulnerable sectors of society. Among the IPs and Moros, children suffer the consequences of the lives of their elders.

Issues Connected to Indigenous Peoples

In spite of the positive developments in the realm of national and international laws which protect and promote the welfare of indigenous peoples, the assertion of these rights is still fraught with problems. Several issues connected to IPs and Moros are instructive in their quest for sustainable development which directly or indirectly impacts on the welfare of the children.

A. Ancestral Domain

Ancestral domain has been of great concern to Moros and Indigenous Peoples, and constitutes the core of their problem of minoritization, marginalization, and cultural alienation.

For the Moros, reclaiming these territories has been at the core of the struggle for self-determination, together with a system of governance suitable to their cultural traditions and values. The series of peace negotiations with the MNLF that produced autonomy did not bring peace, only more problems, because some unresolved internal and external problems continue to affect the efficiency of ARMM..

Today, peace continues to remain elusive although peace negotiations between the GRP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have been ongoing since 2000, albeit interrupted by two outbreaks of conflict. This was about to be concluded by the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) last August 5, 2008 prior to the signing of a later comprehensive agreement. The controversy that ensued on grounds of constitutionality led to a Supreme Court Temporary Restraining Order (TRO), the subsequent dropping of the MOA-AD, the dismissal of the negotiating panel and full stop to the peace process.

As announced by the President, further negotiations will be conducted with a shift in paradigm that calls for dialogue with communities. How this will be undertaken is still to be worked

out. Another of government's guiding principle for a new round of talks is known as DDR (disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation). Earlier this year, the President issued EO No. 777 creating a National Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) to amend RA 9054, particularly the provision on territory to be used as a term of reference for the talks with the MILF. Also to be reviewed is the provision on the sharing of mineral resources (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Jan. 30, 2009). On the other hand, the order to end both the Moro and Communist insurgencies by 2010 still stands, an order that has spurred the National Defense Secretary to ask for an additional 10 billion pesos on top of the 56.5 billion pesos already requested in the 2009 budget (*INQUIRER.net*, Sept. 26, 2008).

For the IPs, claiming their ancestral domain in terms of its delineation and titling has been under the administration of the NCIP. The process has been slowed down by the lack of budgetary allotment and the time needed (only six months) for this purpose, not to mention the additional problems of boundary conflicts and the increasing risks of NCIP personnel. Two of them have been killed by hired guns in Regions 12 and 13, to prevent certain claims from being processed (Interview with Director Quilaman, Sept. 24, 2008, at the NCIP office, Quezon City). NCIP has issued a total of 150 certificates of ancestral Land Titles and 56 Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) comprising 1,114,857.17 hectares as of January 4, 2007 (Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network, 2007).

B. Self-Determination

Self-determination is the right of peoples to: 1) freely determine their political status; and, 2) freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (UN General Assembly Resolution 1514, Dec. 14, 1960).

For the Lumad of Mindanao, self-determination is seen as recognition of ancestral lands and self-government in accordance with their customary laws (although its concrete form has not been spelled out) within the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines (Rodil, p. 94). The Bangsamoro initially conceptualized self-

determination in terms of an independent Bangsamoro Republik constituting the territorial boundary of the sultanates and the four pat-a-pangampong (principalities) of Lanao. However since the signing of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the GRP and the MNLF, independence has been replaced by genuine autonomy and the territorial boundary was determined by a plebiscite.

For both groups self-determination means cultural integrity, self-governance, and control over land and natural resources. But for Moros, it means identity as well as sovereignty.

C. Peace and Security

The current armed conflict in Mindanao as a result of the aborted signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) has led to the dislocation of over 500,000 civilians in over three months of fighting between rogue forces of the MILF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Evacuation centers are running out of food supplies, water, toilet facilities and rooms. There are inadequate medical and psychosocial services (Philippine Human Rights Reporting Project, Sept. 23, 2008). OXFAM has confirmed these observations in a statement made by its Country Director, Lan Mercado, who said, "The humanitarian needs in Mindanao are real." This contradicts the pronouncement of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who said that the situation was "not that bad" and that "the government has enough resources to deal with the problem." Other agencies operating in the area like the United Nations World Food Program (UN-WFP) has issued an appeal for funds in expectation of an escalation of conflict after Ramadan (*INQUIRER.net*, Sept. 26, 2008).

The cost of war has always fallen hard on civilians who are often callously dismissed as "collateral damage." Children are inevitably included as victims and counted among the "casualties of war."

In the present conflict, six children were reportedly killed when a boat they were traveling in was attacked. In an interview, the grandfather of the children claimed, "I saw this plane dive ... and fire two rockets." The military says that the pilot had been fired at by MILF fighters and was simply

reacting (Special Report: “I saw my grandkids die in an air strike,” INQUIRER.net, Sept. 24, 2008). Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima has said that initial CHR investigations showed that the attack was not provoked by members of the MNLF (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Sept. 28, 2008).

During conflict, schools are turned into refugee centers and classes are usually suspended. Children in conflict areas stop going to school. In the ongoing conflict in central Mindanao, the ARMM Education Department has reported that as of Sept. 23, 2008, 195 schools in 24 districts have been closed, affecting at least 82,944 children (Philippine Human Rights Reporting, Sept. 23, 2008). Because of the recurrence of conflict in many Moro areas, interrupted schooling is becoming the norm.

For children, life in these evacuation centers can be harrowing. “Children are unable to sleep for fear that something will happen at night. They cannot eat well. And of course, they are forced to stop schooling... Oftentimes, children get hungry and sick because of inadequate food and decent homes,” observed Children’s Rehabilitation Center Executive Director, Ma. Esmeralda Macaspac (INQUIRER.net, Sept. 25, 2008).

Children remain vulnerable whenever there is an all-out war campaign especially in ARMM. Salinlahi Alliance for Children’s Concern noted that seven percent of the victims of extrajudicial killings recorded by human rights groups in ARMM from 2001 to 2007 were children, or a total of 60. Five children were killed in 2007 who were branded as combatants but were actually schoolchildren caught in the crossfire. Similar incidents were reported by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Sulu Indanan, where children aged 4 to 16 were arrested and tortured on August 19, 2007, and a 12-year-old who shot together with other nine people last Jan. 18, 2007 (“All Promises, No Implementation,” AITPN, 2007).

More than these situations, children are also recruited by armed groups eventually to become combatants in wars.

Child Soldiers

The phenomenon of “child soldiers” is not exclusive to the Philippines. In fact, it is happening in many areas of conflict like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Columbia, Uganda, Liberia, Cote D’Ivoire, West Africa., Angola (Child Soldiers Newsletter, June 2003).

According to Anna Pinto (Indigenous Children, 2003), involvement of indigenous children in conflict seems almost inevitable, since many theaters of conflict are within indigenous lands and indigenous communities are active parties in it (p. 8). In other words, conflict becomes part of the social environment that is experienced by children as part of life. Another factor for children’s involvement may have to do with having a “warrior culture” where some capacity or skill with weapons not only brings prestige but has become a survival strategy (p. 8). This appears to be the case of the Bangsamoros whose struggle for self-determination is still going on.

Makinano’s study (Child Soldiers in the Philippines, 2002) noted that all armed groups (MILF, ASG, NPA) in the country recruit children initially not as combatants but to fulfill other supportive tasks such as being couriers, purchasing and transporting medicines, manning checkpoints, serving as lookouts, collecting revolutionary taxes, and recovering weapons from dead soldiers. But some of these tasks can be dangerous.

The MILF has admitted that “those minors, trained at an early age were usually orphans whose parents died during the conflict in Mindanao and no one is looking after them; others were in communities frequently under attack by government forces, and to enable them to defend themselves, the MILF is providing them with basic military training usually upon the request of parents” (Business World, Sept. 8, 2008). Similar claims about “taking care of children and at the same time training them as per request of parents” have been made by the NPA (Makinano, 2002).

Human Rights Watch noted that children most likely to be recruited are the following: 1) poor; 2) separated from their families; 3) displaced

from their homes; 4) living in a combat zone; 5) with limited access to education, and 6) from communities with inadequate social services. This was confirmed by Myra Macia of the Kabiba Children Alliance, who stated that the problem of child combatants “was rooted in the basic problems of poverty, exploitation and development aggression, especially in farming and ‘lumad’ (native) communities in remote areas” (Makinano, 2002) All these conditions are present in many Moro and IP communities.

Makinano also cited some of the reasons why or how children become involved in armed conflict, such as: 1) psychological reasons (i.e., thrill and excitement); 2) social tension (i.e., peer pressure); 3) propaganda; and 4) forced recruitment or abduction. The military reported that an estimated 2,000 minors fight in the NPA and MILF.

Studies show that child soldiers exhibit severe psychological trauma and ultimately suffer from reduced educational and economic potentials (Forum, March-April 2006, p.2).

This bleak situation is somewhat relieved by the announcement made by Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, that the MILF has signed an action plan with the UN to stop the recruitment and use of children, separate them from the ranks and return them to civilian life. However, how this will be monitored is still to be set up. She also urged the Philippine government to investigate allegations against Philippine Security Forces for grave violations against children. While she complimented the government on its strong legal framework with regard to children and armed conflict, she felt that these policies need to be fully implemented (www.unicef.org.philippines, Dec. 12, 2008).

Although not all children become child soldiers, wars do leave lasting effects in the mental and emotional orientations that stay with them into adulthood. When some children in a refugee camp were asked what they want to be when they grow up, one answered: “I want to be a doctor, but I will not cure Muslims.”

Such a response does not come out of a vacuum. Not when a report cited a church-based humanitarian organization that refused to extend relief assistance to Muslims, leading a priest to issue this advice to NGOs assisting internally displaced persons (IDPs) to “forget their biases against any group of people. Do not select whom you should serve, be they Christian or Muslims” (Mindanews, August 15, 2008).

It is in this context that the issuance by Commission of Higher Education (CHED) Chairman Emmanuel Angeles of a memorandum for the inclusion of peace education in the school curriculum in teacher education institutions by including courses and activities under the Special Topics of the Teacher Education curriculum becomes relevant. The Department of Education (DepEd), Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and CHED are the leading agencies in implementing Executive Order No. 570, which institutionalizes Peace Education in Basic Education and Teacher Education. This is supposed to serve as one of the government’s cornerstones for a long-term plan to establish lasting peace in the country (www.opapp.gov.ph, July 9, 2009). There is much to look forward to in the implementation of this scheme.

D. Human Rights

Discrimination

There are pressing human rights violations that continue to affect the IPs’ and Moros’ engagement with the majorities. This has to do with discrimination (biases, prejudices, stereotypes, even bigotry) that permeates many sectors of society.

In 1999, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CHR commissioned Ugnayang Pang-agham Tao (UGAT) to conduct a study on discrimination against IPs and Moros. This was motivated initially by a comment by a Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) official who claimed that there is no discrimination in the Philippines. UGAT’s findings showed otherwise, since there existed so many prejudices against IPs

and Moros particularly in terms of rights to equality, access to opportunity, stereotyping and prejudices, and the usual suspects of criminality (Interview with Director Elsie Ofreneo, Sept. 25, 2008, at the CHR office, Quezon City).

A more recent study by Gert A. Gust (2007) highlights the common experience of IPs in employment as one of unfair treatment and exclusion. He noted that discrimination perpetuates the vicious cycle of prejudice, exclusion, poverty, lack of education and opportunity and the attending conditions of “deprivation” and “marginalization” (p. 9). Although the study focused on three IP groups, namely the Manobos, Dumagats and Badjaos, similar experiences can be expected across a larger IP population who have remained isolated from mainstream society.

Bangsamoros also face similar, if not more vicious, discrimination in terms of being the subject of police operations for suspicion on illegal drugs and terrorism activities; illegal raids on residences, Dawah Centers, and mosques; illegal detentions; and disappearances. In addition, they are shut out from employment or from renting or buying houses; experience delay or being passed over in terms of promotions, and be subjected to restrictions in travel due to profiling and so on. Even getting a taxi is difficult for women wearing veils or for men wearing traditional attires. The Young Moro Professional Network (YMPN) has disclosed employers’ stereotyping of Muslims as being less educated and difficulty of employment if wearing Muslim dress or using Muslim names, thus leading some Muslims to change their names for employment purposes (Cynthia Bulona, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October, 22, 2008).

In terms of statistics, Pulse Asia’s *Ulat ng Bayan* (Nation’s Report) Survey in 2005 showed that 33 to 44 percent of Filipino adults have an anti-Muslim bias, although only 14 percent of them had any direct dealing with Muslims. Television is the main source of information for the majority of respondents (78%), followed by radio (44%) and newspapers (29%) (Philippine Human Development Report, 2005, p. 55).

Cito Beltran, moderator in a recent forum of the People’s Management Association of the

Philippines (PMAP) held in Baguio (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Sept. 28, 2008, p. B3-2), asked why few Muslims get jobs the moment their religion comes into play. Pilar Almira, director of the Manila General Hospital, answered that some company officials usually hire people who caused less friction in the workplace. This comment points to the presence of stereotyping, biases and prejudices even at the executive level of corporations.

Stereotyping also occurs in media. Such a case reached the Supreme Court after the tabloid *Bulgar* published a story on August 1, 1992 stating that the reason Muslims do not eat pork is because they worshipped the animal. The Supreme Court, however, dismissed the petition of libel as lacking in specificity. But Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio wrote a dissenting opinion saying that “the article was published with the intent to humiliate and disparage Muslims and cast insult on Islam as a religion in this country.” This calls to mind the controversy regarding the publication of the Prophet’s cartoon in Europe justified under the principle of freedom of expression. A recent development from the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHCR) shows the approval of a resolution seeking to curb religious defamation by classifying it as a human rights violation. The text reads, “Defamation of religion is a serious affront to human dignity leading to restriction on the freedom of their adherents and incitement to religious violence.” (www.abs-cbnnews.com, April 7, 2009)

In this context, the self-examination of media leaders that took place in Tagaytay City last August 2008 is instructive (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Editorial, August 26, 2008). Some of the observations brought out in this meeting are not new, yet they persist in the media. One of the observations is that the media tend to focus on the bad or negative news about Mindanao as a matter of economics because they sell. Another observation is that reporting is skewed in favor of Christian viewpoints, acknowledged by the participants as due to the prejudice and biases not only of the reporters but also of the editors - biases and prejudices that are rooted in ignorance or lack of information. The recommendations that journalists be given additional training, including education on the history and culture of Mindanao, that journalists must diversify their sources in

order to get a more holistic view of incidents, like the current conflict in Mindanao, that journalists must conduct research and analysis in historical context to give an in-depth report, are all well and good and support the findings of a 2006 study conducted by the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC), titled “Prejudice and Pride: News Media’s Role in Promoting Tolerance.” This study not only identified biases against Muslims in news reports but also showed a growing perception that media give more attention to extremist views that do not represent the views of the majority of Muslims. Among its recommendations are creating a comprehensive framework for media reportage and adopting a non-discriminatory approach to news reporting (cited in www.edangara.com) .

This situation led the Senate and House of Representatives to address anti-Muslim biases through laws that regulate the use of labeling, particularly in the use of Muslim and Islamic to describe criminals. Senator Edgardo Angara filed Senate Bill 914, An Act Prohibiting the use of the word “Muslim” or “Islamic” in Print, Radio, Television and other forms of Broadcast Media to refer or describe any person convicted of any crime or suspected of committing any unlawful act and providing penalties thereof. Arresto mayor or a fine ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 pesos or both shall be imposed on any person found guilty of the act. The publisher and the president of media outfits shall be liable for not lower than 50,000 pesos. Cancellation of license or franchise may also be imposed (www.edangara.com). Similar bills addressing the same concerns are SB 710 authored by Sen. Ramon Revilla, Jr and SB 2507 authored by Sen. Manny Villar

A House version (House Bill 100) authored by Juan Angara, Balindong, Go, Ilagan, Jikiri, et al was approved by the House on February 5, 2008 and transmitted to the Senate on February 11, 2008.

Congresswoman Faysah Dumarpa, Representative of Lanao del Sur, authored HB 948, An Act Prohibiting Religious or Social Profiling Against Indigenous Communities. The bill seeks to penalize mimicking or imitating a person’s way of speaking, particularly accent or diction. It also includes degrading or insulting manner of a person towards another, particularly one belonging to a cultural

minority. Unjustified, illegal search because of manner of dressing, religion, color, creed or ethnic identity as well as discriminating against a person applying for a job, and entry into establishments because of one’s name, religion, or ethnic origin are also included in this bill. Violators will be fined from 200 to 6,000 pesos or imprisoned for six months to six years (Philippine Star, April 4, 2008). HB 03012, An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Against Persons on Account of Ethnic Origin and/or Religious Belief, authored by Party List AMIN, Mujiv S. Hataman is also pending in the House of Representatives.

However, eliminating discrimination entails a long struggle to educate people. For this reason, the school curricula should also address the inadequate information regarding Moros and IPs. In this context, Rep. Mujiv S. Hataman has authored two bills, namely, HB 01805, An Act Providing the Mandatory Study of Moro History, Culture and Identity in the Curricula of All Levels of Schools in the Country, and HB 1806, An Act Providing for the Study of Lumad History, Culture and Identity in the Curricula of all Levels of Schools in the Country. Both bills have been pending in the Committee on Basic Education and Culture since August 21, 2007.

These bills show the concern among some legislators to address pressing issues important to the welfare of Moros and IPs. That these bills are still pending in either the House of Representative or Senate shows that the concern is not widespread. (For all bills cited, see www.congress.gov.ph/mem.)

Human Rights Violations

UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, Mr. Rodolfo Stave Hagen, said in a recent visit, “I am sorry to learn that the pattern of human rights violations continues, and that there is an increase of these incidents.” The Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Watch, a network of IP networks and non-government organizations, documented 123 killings of IPs from February 2001 to January 11, 2007. Eighty-four (84) of these cases occurred beginning January 2003. The highest number was in 2006, when 42 individuals were killed (CPA Alliance, Feb. 8, 2007).

The most recent human rights case investigated by CHR, apart from the Maguindanao bombing attack on a family cited earlier, occurred in Sulu on February 4, 2008, when eight persons, two of them children aged 4 and 9, were killed in what the military claimed as a “legitimate encounter” against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) but which CHR found to be “wanton carnage” of civilians. One of the victims was an *intégré* who was “maltreated, tortured, hogtied and eventually shot to death in cold blood in the presence of his wife.” Although CHR recommended the filing of a case against the perpetrators, no cases were filed (Mindanews, April 30, 2008).

Another human right violation is extra-judicial killings. From January 2001 to June 2007, 885 have been killed extra-judicially and 183 have disappeared, according to Karapatan (Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights). Most of the victims were affiliated with cause-oriented groups, including leaders from indigenous communities. The Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Watch claims that 123 indigenous persons were killed from February 2001 to January 2007, including 42 deaths in 2006. The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) was identified as an area where extra-judicial killings are high. Human rights abuses affecting 2,312 individuals, 710 families and at least two communities have been recorded (AITPN, 2007).

Administrative Order No. 157 issued on August 21, 2006 set up an Independent Commission to Address Media and Activist Killings and came to be known as the Melo Commission. Accordingly, 77 criminal cases on political killings went on trial, 33 being prepared for prosecution as of mid-October 2007. Six persons have allegedly been convicted but detailed information about the accused has not been made public (AITPN, 2007). Meanwhile, disappearances and extra-judicial killings continue.

E. Globalization

Transnational Corporations

The issue of globalization has both a negative and a positive side. Among the negative effects are the aggressive and increased activities of transnational corporations (TNCs) in mining, logging, oil

drilling, dams that result “in the destruction of the environment and traditional livelihoods, privatization of resources, denial of rights and further denial of their traditional livelihoods.” These are some of the challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the age of globalization, as discussed in the International Conference on Conflict Resolution, Peace-Building, Sustainable Development and Indigenous People, held in Manila (Pauline Fan, Indigenous People discuss means for conflict resolutions, Dec. 25, 2000).

In the Philippines, large-scale mining has been going on in many areas and has been the object of protests from civil society and indigenous peoples groups. In Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, the Subanen tribe has asked for UN intervention in opposing the operation of a large-scale mining company in Zamboanga del Norte (Manila Bulletin Online, August 28, 2007). In the Cordillera, 66 percent of the region’s total area is covered by various mining applications. Twenty three (23) of the priority projects of the government are found here. Many of these mining activities are operated by foreign corporations, so the need to be vigilant in protecting indigenous land rights led to the formation of the Benguet Mining Alert and Action Network (BMAAN) as a collective response of the people to mining issues that affect their communities. More importantly, this network can make sure that all mining companies obtain the necessary FPIC (free, prior and informed consent) to ensure that the community exercises the right to accept or deny any project being undertaken in their territories (Cordillera Peoples Alliances, Aug.11, 2008). That IPs have taken the initiative to organize themselves in order to protect their own communities signals the increasing assertion of indigenous rights.

Because of the Moros’ continued struggle within their territories, extractive and destructive industries have not generally thrived except for the logging concessions given to former rebels or private individuals. Global fishing companies, however, continue to operate in the Moro seas, to the extent that local fishermen have been displaced by bigger fishing vessels and fishing grounds are being destroyed by the use of seine fishing methods. More recently, poaching of endangered species like marine turtles and turtle

eggs has increased. In Tawi-Tawi, 19 alleged Chinese poachers were caught not only with 100 dead and butchered marine turtles but also live ones, together with an estimated 10,000 turtle eggs and two thresher sharks recently identified as “vulnerable” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. A case has been filed against the poachers before a court in Bongao for violating the Philippine Wildlife Resource Conservation and Protection Act (RA 9147). However, the case has been pending in court and, if the resolution of similar cases of poaching is an indication, the usual pardon and the payment of a light fine will be given so as not to damage the relations between the country and China (Philippine Star, Sept. 12, 2007). It goes without saying that an examination and a more stringent implementation of policies are necessary to protect the marine resources of the country.

Cultural and Intellectual Rights

Globalization has also increased the vulnerability of the IPs and Moros’ cultural and territorial domains. Protection of indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights are therefore important considerations in the growth of tourism and other related industries in the Philippines.

Intellectual property rights are commonly protected by copyrights, patents, trademarks and trade secrets. This protection is embedded in international laws such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), ILO 169, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Nationally, protection of IPs’ intellectual property rights is provided for in IPRA, Section 29. However, it has been found that gaps exist between indigenous knowledge and the intellectual property regime due to the nature and character of the former. To bridge this gap, Sedfry M. Candelaria has proposed the following (Candelaria, 2007):

1. Adequate protection of the intellectual property rights of the Indigenous Peoples may be established under the current legal regime through subordinate legislation and coordination between the NCIP and the Intellectual Property Office (IPO).

2. Congress must develop a sui generis (a class by itself) system of registration that penetrates the intellectual property regime.

These proposals become more urgent when cases of biopiracy take place. For example, banaba, a medicinal herb well-known in the Cordillera and other parts of the Philippines, which is used to cure illnesses including diarrhea and diabetes, has been patented by a Japanese company Itoen KK for its anti-diabetic properties (Candelaria). This can also happen in other places where IPs and Moros are not aware about their rights.

Moros have similar problems with respect to cultural materials that are being commercialized because these have not been copyrighted or patented like the case of the Tausug Ja, (native cookies) now marketed under a new brand name. Other cultural products like the pis (male traditional headgear) have been turned into coverings for purses, table placemats, wall décor, and so on. Their cultural significance is no longer mentioned, yet, these are considered heirloom pieces of families and passed on through generations. Songs composed by local singers have also been pirated and commercialized by others. Examples are the popular song Pa Kiring (from Sulu) now sold under the title Dayang-Dayang or the Ba Lelleng (from the Lelleng song of the Sama of Tawi-Tawi).

Presidential Decree 1083, otherwise known as the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, that operates in ARMM does not cover intellectual property rights. This is mentioned in the Final Peace Agreement as within the function of the Regional Legislative Assembly under Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights. But information on how these processes work are not well-known. And since cultural materials are seldom copyrighted, there is no protection under these laws.

Global Telecommunication

On the other hand, globalization has had positive effects in terms of global telecommunication technology. Through these global communication technologies, IPs and Moro groups have been able

to build networks with international support groups addressing common issues and problems. They are able to mobilize both local and international organizations to respond quickly to current issues. More importantly, they can access information easily through the Internet and participate in online discussions on issues that affect their communities. International support groups also provide help in capacity-building programs. Many IPs and Moro organizations operate their own websites which are accessible to anyone interested in their campaign to raise awareness on the issues that affect them.

Global travel has made contacts among varied groups easier. Various festivals that highlight cultural practices particularly of IPs have become popular to local and foreign tourists alike. Moro dances like the Singkil of the Maranao and Pangalay of the Tausug are often shown for tourists' entertainment.

Moros and IPs have participated in the global labor migration resulting in both good and bad experiences.

Ideas and events are accessed with the click of a mouse and cable channels bring news from all over the world on a 24-hour basis.

However, not all IPs and Moro communities are able to take advantage of global communication technology due to isolation and poverty.

Impact on the Welfare of Children

What emerges from this discussion is the direct impact war has on children, particularly those in conflict areas where they suffer psycho-social trauma that, if not treated properly, can lead to emotional and psychological problems later in life. Children may grow up with anger and hostility in their hearts towards their perceived "enemies."

Interrupted schooling is another direct result of conflict. Families who are constantly displaced have children who eventually drop out of school. Compounded by the loss of livelihood during periods of displacements, families could no longer

afford to send their children to school. In addition, school buildings are also used as refugee centers so classes are automatically cancelled. .

Children's health is also endangered, due not only to malnutrition but to acquiring diseases in the refugee centers that may lead to death or serious complications later in life.

Because of continuing conflict, children have become targets of recruitment by armed groups. They become combatants and if captured are tortured and treated as criminals. They can be killed during combat. But they are also killed even as they flee the conflict and become counted as collateral damage.

There are various initiatives going on to help IPs and Moros in the educational sphere. One example is the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) project of Australia. Its components are: In-Service Teacher Training, Pre-Service Teacher Training, Expanded Support to Muslim Education (ESME), School Management, Student Assessment, Material Development, Access, Institute for Indigenous Peoples' Education (IIPE), and Distance Learning Program.

The Institute for Indigenous Peoples' Education (IIPE) serves as the main office for Region XI activities and programs to develop and promote Indigenous Peoples' curriculum, IP culture and IP youth. A Center for Indigenous People's Education was established in Koronadal City in Region XII to provide support for BEAM initiatives for IP communities in the region (www.beam.org.ph).

Recently launched was the Indigenous People's Living Heritage Center, the heart of the Pamulaan Center for Indigenous People's Education at the University of Southeastern Philippines (USEP) Mintal campus, Davao City. Ninety-six (96) young people from 31 IP communities are studying here to obtain college degrees so they can return to help their communities (Philippine Daily Inquirer, October 12, 2008). Still another is the establishment of the Apu Pulamguwan Cultural Educational Center (APC) in Bendum, Malaybalay, Bukidnon. It has a culture-based curriculum integrated with mainstream education

and is considered one of the most successful Indigenous People's school in the country (Kareen Marie Cerdenna, Indigenous People's Education: Mindanao, the Philippines, posted in www.fp2p.org).

Of great interest is the Expanded Support for Muslim Education which started in 2005 assisting private madaris (Islamic schools) in Regions XI, XII, and ARMM. BEAM assistance focused on five development areas namely: 1) curriculum development, 2) learning development, 3) resource development, 4) staff management, and 5) community building. A total of 30 madaris are being supported by BEAM. This is in line with DepEd's program on mainstreaming madrasah education. (Editor's note: madrasah is the singular form of madaris.)

Education advocacy group E-Net Philippines is calling for a budget allotment of 70 million pesos to establish learning centers for IP communities in Davao del Sur, Agusan and South Cotabato, where education is inaccessible. The group also noted that "since there is a concentration of Muslim students in Mindanao, the curriculum should be founded on Muslim wisdom while incorporating the core competencies that will provide children and youth the necessary knowledge to 'compete' in the labor market" (GMANews.TV, August 4, 2008). The need for a curriculum to reflect cultural sensitivity and wisdom has been articulated by Moros and IPs alike. Leah Enkiwe-Abayao puts it this way, "Indigenous peoples should be introduced to western knowledge system but at the same time be equipped with the skills to understand the context of such knowledge so they will not look down on traditional culture as inferior" (Cultural Survival Quarterly, Issue 27.4 at Culturalsurvival@cs.org).

According to UNESCO's latest announcements, governments around the world, including the Philippines, are depriving children of basic literacy and numeracy skills because they failed to address "deep and persistent" inequalities in education (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Dec. 1, 2008). This resonates deeply in isolated and marginalized communities of the Moros and IPs where children are unable to reach schools located in far distances from their homes, or schools with inadequate facilities or teachers. For that matter, children are unable to complete schooling due to the competing needs of the family to earn a living, and children themselves become income earners as child laborers. A recent award winning documentary from GMA7, "Batang Kalabaw," details the conditions of child laborers working in logging camps. When children should be in school, they are out working to help support their families.

The reality and quality of life within many of the Moro and IP communities leave much to be desired, and children are the ultimate bearers of these situations in lives lived in "quiet desperation." According to the 2006 Official Poverty Statistics, the poorest regions are ARMM, Caraga and Region IV-B. National levels like those of Tawi-Tawi (ARMM) and Apayao (CAR) are increasing by more than 40 percent between 2003 and 2006. In Tawi-Tawi, eight out of ten families are poor. Not surprisingly, life expectancy in Tawi-Tawi is also the lowest at 53.4 years (www.mindanews.com, May. 30, 2009).

It can be said without exaggeration that significant strides in many of the issues discussed will enable the IPs and the Moros to live a better quality of life than they have at present and this will positively affect the welfare of their children.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Changes in the conceptualization of Cultural Diversity mean not only recognition but also respect and celebration of cultural differences. Both national and international laws call for the protection, promotion and preservation of different cultures, described by UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura as “the common heritage of humanity.”

Although these laws provide new policy directions for governments, it is the reality on the ground that is important. In the Philippines, the lived realities of those culturally different, like the Indigenous Peoples and the Moros, leave much to be desired. Stereotypes, biases, and prejudices have led to discrimination and human rights violations, to exclusion, isolation, and marginalization.

But these conditions have also brought about a people’s movement to assert their right to self-determination and thereby freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Government and non-government groups, including Moros and IPs, are engaged in various efforts to advance these rights.

There are many strands to these efforts and the need to calibrate them into a cohesive framework and program is necessary. Of these, two strands appear to be most urgent and these are peace and security, and human rights.

The first strand has to do with the conflict in Mindanao. War affects populations, particularly, children, in horrific ways so that the urgency is immediate. In this case, resumption of peace negotiations is a must and indeed it is already being planned. But negotiations can become an exercise in futility if agreements only raise high expectations but are not implemented, usually explained as either due to lack of funds or lack of political will or both. Two negotiations have not brought peace; a third one along the same

lines cannot be justified. Negotiation founded on social justice can be a good beginning to work out the structural arrangements needed for a comprehensive peace. Perhaps the issues of self-determination and ancestral domain discussed in the context of history and rationality rather than political expediency can bring a just conclusion to a very old problem that refuses to go away.

Discrimination as essentially violating human rights is another strand that stands out. To change the mental set that breeds biases and prejudices, be it among media practitioners, corporate managers, politicians, generals, and others in high places, not to mention amongst ordinary citizens, a curriculum that teaches not just skills for employment but skills to live with and that values “others” is a paramount requirement for a society that aims for harmony, unity and peace. Many human rights violations stem from the type of attitude that regards others as “enemy” or “inferior.” Embedded biases rooted in history may be eliminated through a systematic and rigorous campaign within both formal and non-formal educational systems (to include all institutions) that acknowledge the strong contribution of cultural diversity to the life of the nation and thus to nation building itself.

Finally, cultural diversity as a concept by itself cannot improve the negative statistical data referencing IPs and Moros. It must be accompanied by a well-thought-out developmental plan that is sustainable within the context of target societies, which means that they are the planners rather than the object of plans. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. More often communities like the Moros and IPs are subjected to alien schemes that contradict their own sense of self and community. Unless cultural diversity is recognized as vital and integrated into the developmental process, then it will not become the overarching principle beneficial to marginalized communities like the IPs and the Moros. Cultural diversity then will only mean surface appreciation of differences in order that one may appear to be politically correct. Thus, the cycle of too much rhetoric too little justice goes on.

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A photograph of two young children, a boy and a girl, in school uniforms, focused on writing on a blue sheet of paper. The boy is on the left, holding a black marker, and the girl is on the right, also holding a marker. They are both looking down at their work. The background is slightly blurred, showing other children in the classroom.

Developing the Filipino Child for 2020 and Beyond: Education and Literacy

By Dr. Minda C. Sutaria

Introduction

Today's children will be the architects and builders of Philippine society in the year 2020 and beyond. The future of our country lies in their hands. Whether that future will be a resplendent one depends, in a large measure, upon how well we nurture them. The surest way to insure a better world for our future generations is to ameliorate the condition of our children today.

The nature of the nurturance that our children need in order to insure a resplendent future for Philippine society is best defined in terms of basic competencies that are calculated to bring about functional literacy.

To insure that today's children will become functionally literate means that they are helped to acquire:

“a range of skills and competencies
– cognitive, affective and behavioral
– which enables individuals to live and work as human persons, develop their potential, make critical and informed decisions, and function effectively in society within the context of their environment and that of the wider community (local, national, global) in order to improve the quality of their lives and that of society.” (Literacy Coordinating Council, 1998)

This definition and its five-strand indicators, namely, communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving, sustainable use of resources and productivity, development of self and a sense of community, and expanding one's world vision, provide direction not only for basic education but also for higher education. It has provided direction for the National Action Plan to Achieve Education for All which was launched by the Department of Education in 2006 with a **Grand Alliance** of 12 other government entities.

The Grand Alliance includes the heads of the Department of Education as Chair, the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of the

Interior and Local Government, National Economic and Development Authority, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Department of Agrarian Reform, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, National Anti-Poverty Commission, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and Office of the Executive Secretary.

The new definition of functional literacy proposed by the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) in 1998 has made “literacy a blueprint for living and a definition of what it means to be human.” (I. Cruz, 2006)

Education and literacy are essential in developing today's children for the roles they are expected to play as good citizens. To play such roles effectively, it will help if they possess what the 1991 Congressional Education Commission (EDCOM) proposed as earmarks of an “educated Filipino,” namely, “respects human rights, possesses personal discipline guided by spiritual and human values, can think critically and creatively, can exercise responsibly his/her rights and duties as a citizen, whose mind is informed by science and reason, and whose nationalism is based on a knowledge of our history and cultural heritage.”

Today an educated Filipino is perceived as someone who possesses basic competencies which are expected to be acquired and demonstrated with proficiency in both Filipino and English, besides his/her vernacular.

The challenges in society today and in the future require that the competencies of educated Filipinos should not be merely circumscribed to reading, writing, comprehension and numeracy skills which alone may not be sufficient to insure that they will function effectively in their immediate and gradually expanding community and in a rapidly changing world.

Our children today must, therefore, be nurtured in such a way that in the year 2020 and beyond, they will constitute a mass of literate, well-informed, and family- and God-loving citizens who are capable

of understanding complex problems, developing workable solutions for action, forming convictions and making decisions based on facts, acting with vigor and consistency in spite of resistance or opposition of those they interact with, equipped with desirable values, and, best of all, capable of improving the quality of their life and that of society. This adequately essays what this paper may sum up as Filipino 2020, which describes the kind of citizens the country will have, given proper nurture.

Safeguarding Children's Rights: Prerequisite for Their Development

To achieve education and literacy for all by the year 2015 and consequently insure the continuing development of our children today into worthy citizens in 2020 and beyond, it is essential to safeguard their rights as human persons. It is salutary that the government has put in place the country's framework for promoting and implementing interventions for safeguarding the rights of Filipino children, now popularly known as Child 21.

Executive Order No. 310, s. 2000 issued Child 21 which provides a vision of the kind of citizens the country will very likely have if the national government staunchly supports it and all the local governments from Batanes to Sulu would integrate and actualize it in their local development programs as well as allocate funds to support related projects and activities from their internal revenue allotment (IRA). If this happens, then before or by the year 2020, every Filipino child will very likely be:

- born healthy and well, with an inherent right to life, endowed with human dignity;
- happy, loved and nurtured by a strong, stable and God-loving family;
- living in a peaceful, progressive, gender-fair and child-friendly society;
- growing safe in a healthy environment and ecology;

- free and protected by a responsive and enabling environment;
- reaching her/his full potential with the right opportunities and accessible resources;
- imbued with Filipino values steeped in his/her indigenous cultural heritage; assertive of his/her rights as well as those of others; and
- actively participating in decision-making and governance, in harmony and in solidarity with others in sustaining the Filipino nation.

To realize this vision for Filipino children requires the combined efforts of the family, home, school, church, government and in fact, all of society.

Forces for Change: Trends and Megatrends

From the year 2020 and beyond, today's children will have become adults, citizens who are expected to play multiple roles in society. They will be members and heads of families, workers in government and private enterprises or self-employed, leaders in their community, government, education, industry, media and other sectors of society. They will choose their leaders or be the leaders themselves. They will make important decisions that impact on their lives, their family, their community and the whole country. How they will act in their multiple roles at home, in their place of work and in their gradually broadening social groups and community will largely depend upon how well they are nurtured.

The programs developed and implemented to equip the young for the various roles they will play when they become adults will be influenced by certain developments and trends which may accelerate or decelerate progress toward national goals, such as education for all by the year 2015 and a well-developed country by the year 2020 and beyond. A scanning of such forces for change

provides direction for educational development efforts and insures that the programs developed and implemented will produce the kind of citizens envisioned to bring about a resplendent future for the country.

Economic Revolution

Rapid economic development requires a qualified and well-trained labor force and improved support facilities such as roads, bridges, ports and modern electrical and communication systems. Microeconomic technology, which enhances manufacturing processes, increases production and is adopted in a larger scale, will require more sophisticated skills from the labor force. This may result in unemployment of a number of workers, whose skills have become obsolete because of the introduction of modern machinery and production processes and who have not had an opportunity to train in the use of the new machinery and process of production.

There arises a need for training in new production processes and services calculated to raise productivity and improve product quality. Immediate response to this need will raise the workers' competitive position in both the domestic and international fronts. It will undoubtedly encourage the development of innovative delivery modes for industrial education and training and consequently produce a new breed of workers who are technically trained as well as competent and enlightened on their role in industry. Present public and private educational institutions will need to appropriately review and renew their curricular offerings to attune them to the changing needs of business and industry.

The Department of Education has gone a step ahead in this direction by enriching the secondary school curriculum with subjects for technical and vocational skills development in the hope that students who cannot afford or do not plan to go to college can join the world of work and have a means of livelihood upon graduation from secondary school.

Globalization

Today is quite different from a decade or two ago. We find ourselves in an era in which the engine of progress is communication rather than transportation. Communication has brought countries closer through recent wonderful advances which we now see in computers, networks, satellites, film optics and other related technologies and are dramatically changing the way we collect, manipulate and translate information and even provide and acquire education. It has brought people and countries closer together.

Globalization has dramatically altered structures in the world of work. In our globalized world, the competitiveness of national economies and enterprises depends, in a large measure, on a highly skilled workforce that can respond effectively and efficiently to changing work processes. An essential part of such processes is ICT. This requires continuous adjustment on account of evolving hardware and software, modern communication and the immediacy of information on the Internet. As the knowledge and skills of workers are regularly updated and expanded, more advanced knowledge of ICT becomes a must. Such new and changing demands require appropriate and periodically updated training. Akin to the demands of rapid economic development, globalization requires appropriate and periodically updated training. Such catchwords as "lifelong learning" and "learning-on-demand" would appropriately describe the kind and extent of training needed. The training may heavily lean on ICT and may incorporate e-learning and mobile learning.

UNESCO-APNIEVE suggests that an effective way of counteracting the negative effects of globalization is to share universal values for regional and global peace without detracting from the desirable traditional values of the country which must be strengthened and maintained. Curricula for the development of desirable values need to be reviewed and revised to insure that the negative effects of globalization, such as materialism and indifference to one's native culture and values, are avoided and the desirable traditional values of the

Filipino, such as respect for elders and authority, close family ties and the “bayanihan” spirit, are retained and strengthened. It is highly desirable that the virtue of punctuality and the capacity to listen attentively become attributes of every Filipino man, woman and child so that “Filipino time” which is often expressed with a measure of disdain will then mean “on time.” Should this happen in the near future, no time will be frittered away and people can be more effective and efficient in everything they do.

A global environment is participative, consultative and decentralized. This means that the Filipino as a global citizen will need to behave in a more democratic and consultative manner. Greater public access to new information technology needs to be provided to give the public greater opportunities to participate and provide occasions for continuing dialogue and consultation. (Braid, 1995).

The kind of literacy needed in a global environment is the ability to be responsive and flexible, because times change and even occurrences that we do not anticipate do happen. The school through the curriculum should teach the Filipino learner to be continually responsive or to even go beyond what is prescribed to be an effective member of society.

Lifelong Learning

The increasing interconnection between individuals, societies and countries around the world, brought about by new information and communication technologies, has given rise to the need to review and interpret our usual ways of thinking and doing. Since the socio-economic and political environment has changed and continues to change, the potential individual and social benefits of lifelong learning have become valuable in the development of individuals and society.

Lifelong learning is popularly understood as learning from the cradle to the grave. UNESCO-initiated reports, such as the 1972 Faure Report and the Delors Report which introduced the four pillars of lifelong learning – learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live

together – emphasized the need for each person to learn how to learn and how to use knowledge ethically in order to fully contribute to social development.

Lifelong learning becomes imperative in the face of rapid explosion of knowledge and information and the fast rate of change in the experiences of individuals and their capacity to assimilate and apply these in their everyday lives.

The Delors Commission identified certain tensions that may affect the process of lifelong learning, four of which have particular relevance to the Philippines. These are the tensions between the local and the global, the individual and the universal, tradition and modernity, and the spiritual and the material (UNESCO-APNIEVE, 1998). These projected tensions give rise to the need for curricular offerings and teaching strategies to be reviewed and renewed in such a way that learners will be adequately equipped to forestall such tensions or to reduce them if they occur at all. Development of the virtue of tolerance and understanding can never be overemphasized in the process of preventing or reducing such tensions which could militate against lifelong learning and the development of a wholesome personality – an attribute that is desirable for both our youth and adults in a global society. Values development efforts will need to address the need for tolerance among the citizens of tomorrow.

Burgeoning Partnership between Education, Business and the Community

A salutary trend in educational development in the country is the burgeoning partnership between the education, community and business sectors, which is evident in the increasing involvement of the business sector and the community in developing and supporting ways to improve education in the country. The growing closeness between those who manage and provide education, particularly in the basic education sector, and the corporate sector and the community has resulted in more support for education and greater enthusiasm on the part of the people to support it.

Brigada Eskwela, which brings the community to the schools shortly before school opening to help spruce up the classrooms for a more pleasant atmosphere for learning, becomes quite visible right before school opening in May and June. It is gratifying to observe how the community contributes materials, money and volunteer labor needed to clean and put in order the classrooms and school grounds a week or two before enrollment and school opening. The increasing participation of the community in preparing the schools for school opening has not only improved the classrooms and the school grounds but also demonstrated genuine civic spirit among the people of a community. The cleaner, better-looking and more adequately equipped classrooms inspire the teachers and the learners and promote more effective learning sessions for the young. The close relationship between the parents and the teachers has increasingly inspired both to work together for the benefit of the learners.

Private sector contributions through the Adopt-A-School program have increased from two billion pesos in 2002 to four billion pesos in 2008. There are indications that this will further increase in the coming years.

There are at present several business organizations that have active education-related programs. In 2002, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWPP) launched the Education Revolution, which involves mentoring of teachers, because it strongly believes that this endeavor is the only visible long-term solution to improving the quality of education and redressing poverty.

The League of Corporate Foundations evolved the 57-75 Movement which is intended to restore the level of quality that public education has missed for sometime. An influential group of business leaders collectively known as Philippine Business for Education (PBED) supports the project 1000 Teachers Program which provides scholarships for the best and the brightest high school graduates who want to become teachers. Synergeia, an organization of professionals and civic-spirited citizens, supports innovative programs calculated to improve the quality of education in some schools using funds it raises.

There is a host of other civic-spirited and concerned groups that have launched projects that contribute to raising school participation rates and learners' level of achievement, all intended to help achieve the goal of education of good quality for all.

The combined support of the community and the business sector for education will undoubtedly significantly contribute to the realization of the goal of achieving quality education for all by the year 2020.

To insure the continuous and progressively increasing support of the community and business for education, the Department of Education may need to create an office to efficiently and effectively handle all private sector contributions to education. The functions of such office will include mounting campaigns for support of education; keeping track of all contributions/aid to education and how they are spent; planning and seeing through the implementation of educational projects supported by the community and business sector; preparing reports on the projects; communicating to donors, the community and the public the status and results of projects/programs supported by the community and the business sector; fiscal management; coordinating with project implementers; and preparing status reports on projects being implemented.

The manner in which the Department of Education will treat all projects and contributions addressed to improving the outreach and quality of education will to a large extent determine the success of such projects in achieving the goal of basic education for all by 2015 and insure the continuing support of these sectors for education.

Population Explosion

Our rapid population growth rate of 2.1 percent has made it very trying for the government to adequately provide funds to support the school population that increases by the millions yearly. While population explosion may insure adequacy of human capital, it militates against efforts to provide quality education for all. As long as our population increases at the rate it does today, the

dream of a higher quality of education for all will remain an elusive one. While education's share in the government's budget is the largest slice, it has never been adequate to cover expenditures necessary to raise participation rates and the quality of outcomes of education.

The budget of P149 billion in 2008 has not warranted the organization of smaller classes nationwide which could be more conducive to effective learning and consequently reduction of school dropout rates. Consider how much learning can take place in a class of 50 or more on the double-single session plan. Some learners especially the slower ones, who do not receive the attention they urgently need from their teacher in order to learn effectively in such a large class, may drop out and constitute educational wastage that the country cannot afford

To solve the problem of inadequate funds for basic education every year, there is need for curbing the country's galloping population growth rate. A population program that is acceptable to all – the family, church, public, government and other social institutions – will ultimately result in a school population size that will not unnecessarily strain government resources and will very likely insure the provision of a better quality of education for all.

The school can play an important role in curbing rapid population growth by making the young learners' realize that large families need more resources to support them and to insure that they will have a better quality of life. If early in their lives, they will perceive the advantage of smaller families, then they will likely decide to have the size of family that they can comfortably support when they grow up, get married and have a family. This underscores the need for the school to develop in the young the ability to make critical and informed decisions in order to improve the quality of their lives and that of society as they grow up.

Environmental Degradation: Need for Education for Sustainable Development

The deterioration of the environment, which stems from people's ignorance and lack of concern for

protecting, preserving and improving it, impacts on the quality of life of learners, specifically their health, well-being and safety, which affects their capacity to learn and to attend school regularly.

The survival and security of humanity rest upon how people acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for the benefit of the common good. Continuing education for the sustainability of the environment is a must in the development of today's children. They must be helped to realize that they have a moral obligation to save the earth not only for themselves but for future generations as well, and that they can do this by revising their patterns of behavior and even modifying their lifestyles.

Education for sustainable development "must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland, 1987). It places people and the quality of their present and future life in the center of an activity addressed to their development: To realize real improvement in the lives of people, sustainable development must achieve a good balance between economic growth and social and cultural development and environmental protection.

To insure a resplendent future for our children today, the schools for both basic and higher education must educate them for active participation in insuring sustainable development. Print and broadcast media must be harnessed to intensify the country's program for sustainable development which should be the concern of all. Continuing education for sustainable development should enable all Filipinos to show a deeper concern for not only preserving the environment but also improving it as we work to achieve a better, more livable and secure future.

International Labor Migration

Diaspora cuts like a double-edged sword. While parents who work overseas may put more food on the table that makes their children healthy and mentally alert and have more copious means to support their education, they may deprive them of

parental tender loving care and guidance which are essential in their development into citizens with well-rounded personalities who can confidently take their place in a democratic society.

The 2003 Children and Families Study* revealed that “parental absence creates displacements, disruptions and changes in care-giving arrangements.” However, “despite the emotional displacement, the children of migrants are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis the children of non-migrants in many dimensions of well-being. Thus, when the family is stable, it can withstand the separation imposed by migration.” This stresses the need for caring families in the development of today’s migrants’ children into worthy citizens of tomorrow.

The 2003 study revealed that the children of migrants are better off in terms of socio-economic variables. This negates the finding in the 1996 study (Battistello and Conaco, 1998, 1996) that OFW children did not do as well as non-OFW children in academic performance

The 2003 study, however, revealed that, just as the 1996 study indicated, the children of migrant mothers did not do as well in school as the other children. While the improved economic status of migrant families has produced more healthy OFW children, the children of migrant mothers did not do as well in school compared to other children. This has implications for the nature of caregiving that should be provided children of migrant mothers in order not to dwarf their development and to develop them into citizens ready to face the challenges of the new millennium

One interesting finding of the 1996 study is that the children of migrants have higher church/mosque attendance and incidence of praying than the non-OFW children. This reveals that the “lingering emotional costs of the separation of family members are redressed within the family and through prayers.” There is reluctance of such children’s families to seek other agencies or institutions when it comes to non-economic problems.

The findings of both the 1996 and the 2003 studies point to the need for more concerted action for the benefit of children of migrant parents. Mass media need to be more active in providing education and information to OFW families on such relevant topics as child rearing, parenting tips, and changing gender roles, particularly the role of fathers especially when the mother is the overseas worker.

The important role that the government plays in delivering appropriate programs to OFW families can never be over-emphasized. Local governments and the school can collaborate and mount programs on caregiving, parenting and gender sensitivity or guarding of migrant children. Teachers, school heads and other personnel, as part of the support system of OFW children, could be more prepared for such role if their awareness and understanding of migrant issues is enhanced.

Alternative Learning System (ALS)

The alternative learning system of the Department of Education (DepEd) is perceived by no less than Secretary Jesli Lapus as “the lifeblood of its Education for All efforts,” for as he declared, “without it, achievement of all Education for All targets within the time frame set cannot be realized.” Limited resources prevent the system from addressing the needs of out-of-school learners, particularly those who dropped out of school because of poverty, ill health and other reasons.

It is salutary that the Department of Education has adopted the alternative learning system as its strategy for solving its problem of declining school participation rate.

The Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) has taken bold and innovative steps to raise the quality of education provided by its Alternative Learning System (ALS). It strives to develop and introduce cost-effective alternative learning strategies for achieving adult functional literacy in the regional languages, Filipino and English.

In spite of its limited budget, it has progressively developed a curriculum parallel to that of the formal education system for basic education which is the basis of its accreditation test. Given once yearly in earlier years, the test was administered twice in 2008.

BALS, which is mandated to oversee all ALS efforts, gets less than one percent of the annual allocation for basic education. This is far too small compared to what the vast ALS learners require to educate them, particularly the out-of-school youth population of about 12 million, around the same number of those who are in school. BALS can meet the learning needs of only a small portion of this number, because DepEd has not much to spend for alternative learning.

While DepEd continues to find ways of bringing back out-of-school youth to the formal school system, many of these youth may choose not to go back simply because they are overaged or their economic situation bars them from doing so. This is the sad reality that DepEd has to contend with.

Out-of-school youth living in conflict areas especially in Muslim Mindanao and those who have peculiar educational needs, such as nomadic people from cultural minority groups, are hampered from going to school. These and other marginalized learners require alternative modes of education that can provide them with literacy skills which they need to become effective and productive members of society.

While those in the education sector recognize the value of ALS as a strategy for achieving the goals of EFA, it has not yet earned general acceptance as a legitimate learning strategy by most of both our policymakers and the general public. This behooves the need to increase public awareness and acceptance of it as a legitimate strategy for learning. To gain wider acceptance of ALS, DepEd has gone to the extent of making people's champion, Manny Pacquiao, the Ambassador for the Alternative Learning System, after he successfully hurdled the Accreditation and Equivalency Examination of ALS in 2007. The country cannot afford to let more Filipinos go

into adulthood without benefit of basic education. Our already overcrowded public schools are incapable of accommodating the about 16 million Filipinos who have either dropped out of school or never gone to school (Lapus, 2007).

Measures are being taken to improve the quality and outreach of ALS such as the use of various technologies now available like radio, TV, e-learning and other multimedia forms that may provide more cost-effective alternative learning opportunities. The upgrading of the personal and professional welfare of the mobile teachers and integration of ALS in the pre-service teacher education curricula are currently receiving attention as steps towards raising the quality of education through ALS.

The need to improve the ALS standards through continuing evaluation of its programs, materials and evaluation instruments is being met in order to make its outcomes comparable to that of the formal system.

The increasing number of examinees for the Accreditation and Equivalency Program (A and E) is an indication that more and more out-of-school youth and dropouts are taking advantage of it.

The progress of ALS has lately been accelerated by local governments that have provided funding support for it. Prominent in the reports of local governments that merited prizes in the 2008 LCC National Literacy Awards were lists of ALS passers who went to college and graduated with honors and those who are doing well in business and other areas of endeavor.

Given sufficient budget and human resource support, ALS will play an important role in the National Education for All program.

Basic Education Today: the Challenges

The 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) revealed the existence of nine million Filipinos, 10 to 64 years old, who are not functionally literate. This means that this sector of the population does not possess the basic

skills and essential knowledge that would make them effective members of Philippine society. The 2003 FLEMMS likewise revealed that, out of 57.6 million Filipinos who are 10 to 64 years old, 3.8 million do not know how to read and write, and a total of 9.2 million are not functionally literate or unable to compute and lack certain important numeracy skills.

Another cause of concern is the poor performance of the public system of elementary and secondary schools. The whole system has “failed to deliver overall excellence (high average achievement by all students) as well as assure general fairness (low variation in levels of achievement among individual students) to 90 percent of the total number of school children that the schools take in Grade 1 each year, and this failure has continued yearly for at least the past four decades through different economic circumstances and political administrations.” (Philippine EFA 2015 National Plan, p. 8)

This indicates that “most students either do not complete the full ten years of basic education, or obtain their grade school or high school credentials without necessarily acquiring sufficient mastery of the required competencies particularly in English.” (Philippine EFA 2015 National Plan, p. 8)

School participation and completion rates are likewise dismal. “In 2002-2003, 90.32 percent of the total population, 6-11 years old – the official ages for Grades 1 to 6 – were enrolled at the beginning of the school year, but the 9.68 percent that were not in schools constitute nearly 1.2 million disadvantaged children. These school-age children not in school will very likely join the ranks of adult illiterates or functional illiterates.” (Philippine EFA National Plan, p. 7)

Educational disadvantage is not confined to those who never go to school, for more than 90 percent of school-age Filipinos who enter school drop out along these lines (Philippine EFA National Plan, p. 7):

1. For every 1,000 Grade 1 entrants
 - 312 will leave school before finishing

Grade 6, most of them in the first two years,

- 249 will finish the sixth grade at an average of 9.6 years, each repeating some grade levels 2-3 times, and
- only 439 will graduate from elementary school in six years. Only seven who graduate from elementary school have sufficient mastery of English, Mathematics and Science competencies after exerting effort for an average of 7.31 school years per graduate.

2. For every 1,000 entrants in first year high school

- 389 will leave school without completing four years,
- 353 will graduate after repeating 2-3 times, taking an average of 6-7 years, and
- only 248 will graduate within the required four years.

3. Taking the two levels together, a typical group of 1,000 Grade 1 entrants eventually will yield only:

- 395 finishing high school,
- 162 finishing elementary and high school in 10 years, and
- only 233 finishing elementary and high school after each taking up to 16 years to complete the 10-year basic education cycle.

It is likely that a very small number of these high school graduates will have acquired the necessary competencies expected from ten years of schooling.

The figures quoted above reveal that “most Filipino students acquire the basic tools of functional literacy, although a considerable number (up to 3.6

million are not literate and up to 9.2 million are not functionally literate) do not even have rudimentary tools.” (Philippine EFA 2015 National Plan, p. 8)

From the point of view of building a nation, “a survey of young people 7-21 years old revealed that 65 percent do not participate in any community activities; only 37 percent can sing the national anthem; and only 28 percent can write the Panatang Makabayan. These facts reveal that the young today have an education disadvantage from the point of view of nation building.” (Philippine EFA National Plan, p. 6)

The figures cited above constitute the challenges that the Grand Alliance for Education for All faces, for they reveal that the whole Philippine population is still very far from attaining the ideal of an educated nation.

Basic Education Today: DepEd 2009 Report Card

The business of educating the nation has become more challenging from year to year. This year it has become doubly exacting on account of the current global economic recession added to the yearly problems of inadequate resources, school population explosion and the worsening economic deprivation of a sizeable sector of the population.

As a strategic response to nagging problems in basic education, DepEd initiated the project Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) in 2006. It was designed to enable the sector to attain the goals of its Education for All (EFA) Plan 2015 which aims to provide basic competencies to everyone in order to attain functional literacy for all.

The EFA Plan has four intended outcomes: (1) universal coverage of out-of-school youth and adults in the provision of basic learning needs, (2) universal school participation and elimination of dropouts and repetition in the first three grades, (3) universal completion of the full cycle of basic education schooling with satisfactory achievement levels by all at every grade and year, and (4) total community commitment to attainment of basic education competencies for all.

BESRA is envisioned to revolutionize the delivery of basic education and to transform the culture within DepEd. It has five key result thrusts: (1) continuous school improvement facilitated by active involvement of stakeholders, (2) better learning outcomes achieved by improved teacher standards, (3) desired learning outcomes enhanced by national learning strategies, multi-sectoral coordination and quality assurance, (4) improved impact on outcomes resulting from complementary Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), the alternative learning system and private sector participation, and (5) institutional cultural change in DepEd to facilitate school initiatives for assuring quality.

The UNICEF-assisted Child-Friendly School System (CFSS) initiative under the Sixth GOP-UNICEF Country Program for Children provides staunch support for the policy and program agenda of BESRA and EFA.

How has basic education fared since the initiation of the EFA Plan and BESRA? Quoted below are DepEd’s responses to some of the frequently-asked questions on basic education in a report it issued recently, titled “The DepEd Report Card: Moving on To Sustain Better Performance.”

- How large is the student population?

For the school year 2009-2010, the DepEd anticipated 22.44 million enrollees for preschool and basic education. Of this number, 19.46 million (87%) are in public schools, 14.22 million in elementary schools and 6.97 million in secondary schools. Those enrolled in public elementary schools comprise 92 percent of the total enrolment, while those in public high schools comprise 80 percent.

- How adequate are the resources for schoolchildren enrolled in public schools?

For Textbooks

Public school students are assured of adequate and quality textbooks and other learning materials. DepEd’s textbook

inventory for the school year 2009-2010 is 76.2 million. The textbook-pupil ratio for English is 1:1, Science 1:2, Mathematics 1:3, Filipino 1:2 and Makabayan 1:1. Within the school year 2009-2010, the delivery of 10.8 million textbooks for Mathematics, Physical Education and Music and Arts will very likely bring the textbook-pupil ratio for all the subjects to 1:1. This augurs well for raising the learners' level of achievement.

The DepEd has streamlined its textbook procurement process. It has been given recognition for its effectiveness and efficiency by the World Bank. Cited as an international best practice, it is now being replicated by a number of countries.

For Teachers

There are 492,035 public school teachers nationwide, of whom 353,254 are in elementary schools and 138,781 in high schools as of 2008; and in 2009, 8,823 new teaching positions were made available.

While the present average teacher-student ratio for public elementary schools is 1:36 and is slightly higher at 1:39 for public high schools, the ratio may not be so in some remote and thickly-populated areas such as the cities with dense populations. The lower-ratio classes may exist in distant and hard-to-reach barangays.

For Classrooms and Other Facilities

A total of 431,412 classrooms exist nationwide. In 2008 DepED constructed 9,835 classrooms. For 2009, additional 10,538 more were planned to be built. Between January and April 2009, 4,644 classrooms were built and 2,300 more were scheduled for completion last June 2009.

The latest inventory lists 17,111,388 pieces of school furniture. By the end of 2009, additional 1,212,750 pieces of school furniture will be made available.

While a sufficient number of chairs were made available for school year 2009, shortages may occur in some areas on account of the continuing increase in student population and destruction caused by natural and man-made calamities.

On Training of Teachers

- How does DepED insure qualified and competent school heads and teachers?

A total of 132,127 public school teachers received various types of in-service training to further enhance their teaching competencies.

To upgrade the competencies of non-majors teaching science and mathematics, the DepEd, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Commission of Higher Education (CHED) have been providing much-needed training through a Certificate Program for non-majors in Science and Mathematics. Teachers who complete the program earn a certificate for Minor in Science and Mathematics.

A similar program for non-majors in teaching English, Filipino, Social Studies, Music, Arts and Physical Education is offered by Centers of Training identified by the DepED and CHED.

To improve teacher proficiency in the use of the English language, a National English Proficiency Program has been launched.

Non-qualified Madrasah teachers are enrolled in the Alternative Teacher Education Program for Madrasah teachers offered by selected teacher education institutions.

School heads now play a more active role in the training of their teachers. The decentralization thrust of DepED has propelled them to plan and implement training courses using funds directly downloaded to their schools by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Through such grants, some 4,000 schools are expected to receive

P50,000.00 each to fund school improvement activities including training courses for teachers in 2009.

On Training of School Officials

In 2008 the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) located in Baguio trained 2,600 principals in highly relevant areas such as school-based management, school improvement planning, instructional leadership, bridging leadership and simplified record keeping.

Some 1,140 district supervisors were trained by NEAP on school development planning and related topics.

The Asian Institute of Management (AIM) was contracted to offer its Leadership Development Program to undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, regional directors, assistant regional directors and other senior central office officers. The Management Development Program was for superintendents and the Basic Business Development Program was for school principals.

Other institutions that provided leadership and management training to DepED personnel are SEAMEO INNOTECH, University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University.

On Competency Standards

The DepED has adopted the National Competency-Based Teachers Standard (NCBTS) as framework for the personal and professional development of its teachers. Complementing NCBTS is the Teacher's Strengths and Needs Assessments (TSNA) that guides the teacher in determining his/her professional development needs.

Adoption of NCBTS, a competency-based system of selection, recruitment and development of teachers and principals, helps insure that the DepED would avoid recruiting or promoting teachers and school officials who could merely end up being square pegs

in round holes. It will encourage the best and the brightest to pursue a teaching career especially if the compensation system is upgraded.

DepED has been working with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), Civil Service Commission (CSC) and other relevant agencies and teacher education institutions for full institutionalization of the NCBTS.

- Is BESRA making a difference?

After considering all that DepED has done through BESRA thus far, two questions may be raised: Is BESRA making a difference? Is BESRA bringing the country closer to realizing education for all by 2015?

All the statistics on the performance indicators defined above reveal improvement from 2006 to 2008, as shown in DepED's report titled "The DepED Report Card: Moving on to Sustain Better Performance." Take a look at the DepED performance in meeting the challenge of increasing the education system's efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 1 shows how DepED's performance has improved since BESRA was launched.

SY 2008-2009 Participation Rate is based on a preliminary enrolment report.

Note in Table 1 how participation, cohort survival, completion and dropout rates have improved from school year 2006-2007 to 2007-2008 in both the elementary and secondary levels.

Has the proficiency level of students increased? The scores in the Grade 6 National Achievement Test which is administered to students towards the end of the school year mirror modest gains from the Projects BESRA and EFA 2015.

In Table 2, note a 4.0 percent increase in English, Math and Science from SY 2005-2006 to SY 2006-2007, and from SY 2006-2007 to SY 2007-2008

Table 1. Key Performance Indicators of Increasing Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness

Indicator	Level	School Year 05–06	School Year 06–07	School Year 07–08	School Year 08–09	School Year 09–10
Participation Rate	Elementary	84.4	83.2	84.8	85.2	90.0
	Secondary	58.5	58.6	61.9	53.6	70.0
Cohort Survival Rate	Elementary	70.0	73.4	75.3	77.0	79.0
	Secondary	67.3	77.3	79.9	80.5	81.0
Completion Rate	Elementary	68.1	71.7	73.1	75.0	77.0
	Secondary	61.7	72.1	75.4	76.0	76.3
Dropout Rate	Elementary	7.3	6.4	6.0	5.0	4.0
	Secondary	12.5	8.6	7.5	6.0	5.5

Table 2. Grade 6 National Achievement Test in MPS

Indicator	School Year 05–06	School Year 05–06	% Improvement from Previous Year	School Year 07–08	% Improvement from Previous Year
English, Science and Math	51	55	4%	61	6%
Overall	55	60	10%	65	8%

an increase of 6.0 percent. Should the trend of increases continue, there is hope of raising the achievement level of Filipino students to at least 75 percent which the League of Corporate Foundations has set in its desire to restore the level of quality that the public has missed for several decades.

In terms of mastery level, students with low level declined from 8.18 percent in 2007 to 3.67 percent in 2008. Students moving towards mastery improved from 39 percent to 49 percent. Those who are close to achieving mastery now represent 5.53 percent from 4.0 percent in 2007.

The inspiring gains chalked up by DepEd since it launched BESRA and EFA 2015 are perceived by many as the spark at the end of the tunnel which may grow into a bright light as the national government continues to progressively increase its appropriation for basic education, to keep BESRA and EFA going in high gear, until such time that Filipino children start developing into citizens envisioned as the architects and builders of the Filipino nation in 2020 and beyond.

Bridging the Gap: The Realities Today and the Scenario

In strategic planning, a scenario is like a lighthouse that guides a ship's captain during a dark, stormy night. It serves as a potent guide to action in the direction of a goal. It has the capacity to propel an individual or a group to dream up strategic options for bridging the gap between present realities and the desired future.

The scenario of today's Filipino children in 2020 and beyond requires massive multi-sectoral and results-oriented action to bring it into reality. All sectors of society must provide their undivided support to realize it. If indeed our children today are to build a resplendent future for the Philippines, they must be provided the kind of environment that will develop them into world-class citizens imbued with knowledge, skills and values that will insure that they will function effectively in their rapidly changing and broadening social milieu.

Both government and non-government sectors will need to collaborate and act promptly, both singly and in collaboration with other sectors, to accelerate the pace of action to close the gap between the scenario of today's Filipino children in 2020 and beyond and the present reality. Some strategic actions calculated to contribute to the realization of a positive scenario are presented in the following sections.

More Vigorous Advocacy for Child Development

A cogent social advocacy program which will be effective in getting the whole Filipino nation involved in developing today's children into world-class citizens would be an essential first step towards realizing the dream of a resplendent Philippines in 2020 and beyond.

Such a program could best be spearheaded by the education, health, labor, communication and social services sectors, both public and private. It could be initiated by the Grand Alliance for Philippine Education for All by the year 2015. It could be an extension of the present social advocacy program for Education for All and the Literacy Coordinating Council's program for Universalization of Literacy.

Mass media could be effectively harnessed to drum up support for the development of the Filipino child as envisioned. Priority must be given to the underprivileged and deprived sectors of society without neglecting all the other sectors. The Philippine Information Agency, a member of the Literacy Coordinating Council, could provide leadership in pursuing the advocacy program. Slogans, which have proved to be effective in advocacy campaigns, could be developed with the participation of as many sectors of society as possible. Print and broadcast media could make such slogans part of their daily fare as contribution to the effort. A slogan contest in the most widely spoken vernaculars, besides English and Filipino, could be an effective way of winning supporters of education for all. In fact, an appropriate slogan to broadcast is "Education for all by all."

Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Plan of Action for EFA to Insure Effective Implementation

The goals of education and literacy set in the 2015 National Plan of Action for Education for All hew to the scenario conjured in this paper.

A dynamic monitoring and evaluation system for BESRA and the 2015 National Plan for EFA will, to a great measure, insure that its goals and objectives are achieved. It is assumed that national targets are set, and these are used as bases for target setting by the regions which in turn will require that targets for divisions, districts and schools are set. The targets will propel the whole country to work hard to achieve them before 2015.

Periodic monitoring and evaluation vis-à-vis targets set and use of the results to improve future performance of the various education systems at different levels – national, regional, division, district and school – will insure meeting of the targets and achievement of goals as scheduled.

It is assumed that the goals of education and literacy in the National Plan of Action for EFA 2015 hew to the scenario put forth in this paper for today's Filipino child in the year 2020. If the targets of EFA 2015 are not met, then the rosy scenario for 2020 may very likely not become a reality.

In assessing progress in providing relevant education for all, the process will doubtless largely be a numbers game. The assessment will bring out numbers to represent school participation, dropout, and repetition rates which will indicate whether or not targets are met. They will not, however, reveal whether all the children of school age are in school effectively learning with a teacher, or whether or not all illiterates had access to a literacy class and became functionally literate. Numbers alone cannot print a complete picture of the status in universalizing primary education, eradicating illiteracy, promoting continuing education and raising the quality of education – the thrusts of Education for All. The numbers may serve as indicators of access and equity – two important dimensions of education for all – but they cannot effectively tell us whether basic learning needs

have been met and the quality of outcomes as planned has been achieved.

While a teacher or principal may report that 80 percent of her students have answered correctly 95 percent of the items in an achievement test in reading or mathematics, we still would not know whether the learning is relevant, that is, whether it will help to develop the learners, help them to continue learning, and improve as they grow up. Numbers alone cannot tell whether the education that learners receive is relevant to their concerns and experiences and their everyday life which involves health, sanitation, nutrition, work, environment and family. Here lies the greatest challenge to those who manage education and literacy programs in our country. Statistics alone cannot reveal whether the learners' unique learning needs as members of society are being met. It does not suffice that they can read, write and handle numbers. They need to become familiar with their culture, their rights as citizens, and their roles and responsibilities as citizens in forging sustainable development as well.

To determine whether the basic learning needs of children in primary school are being met, there is a need to devise a systematic way of analyzing test scores and test content. Such needs comprise learning for survival, full capacity development, living and working with dignity, participating fully in development, improving one's life, making wise decisions and continuing to learn. The essential learning tools include literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem-solving skills, while the basic learning content can be categorized as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met vary from individual to individual and change from time to time. Such changes must be considered in assessing the outcomes of education

Exploring Unbeaten Paths to Enhance Education and Literacy

If an outcome approach is adopted, it would not matter where and how the learners acquire what they are supposed to learn. Learning does not always happen in the traditional classroom setting.

The rigidities of the formal school tend to exclude some children from school, especially the poor ones who have responsibilities at home or on the farm, the disabled, those who live in remote villages, those whose parents maintain a nomadic life, girls whose culture forbids them from learning under the tutelage of a male teacher, and children who find school unappealing and prefer to stay out of it. Alternatives to the formal school must be adopted so that such children could be provided education even when separated from the teacher in time and space. Unless such alternatives are made available to those who need it, the education and literacy of disadvantaged Filipino children will continue to be stymied.

A wealth of experience in some countries demonstrates how exploration of unbeaten paths to learning can counteract the rigidities of the formal school and make it feasible to reach out to the vast number of unreached school-age populations.

The Southeast Asian Ministries of Education Organization Center for Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO-INNOTECH) has demonstrated the effectiveness of distance education for those who are unable to have face-to-face contact with a teacher/trainor. Thailand, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, New Zealand and Australia have demonstrated the effectiveness of distance education programs in delivering education to those who are unable to attend school. Through learning systems that utilize printed and audiovisual self-instructional materials, a variety of interesting and user-friendly materials, and occasional contact sessions with tutors or facilitators and user-friendly assessment schemes, they have been able to effect out-of-school learning. The in-school, off-school approach introduced in the country in the early eighties and the IMPACT (Instructional Management by Parents, Community and Teachers) system which was designed as a practical intervention to address the problem of overcrowding in public schools as well as the lack of teachers, textbooks and other learning materials are worth considering for institutionalization to solve the problem of overcrowding in the 6,000 plus overcrowded public schools.

Where teachers are insufficiently trained, distance education offers an alternative for providing them with much-needed training or upgrading without pulling them out of the classroom where they should be. China trained 1.2 million teachers through TV broadcasts in six years and the Allama Iqbal Open University's Primary Teacher Orientation Course of Pakistan trained 47,000 teachers in six months.

There are countless permutations of distance education practiced worldwide which the Philippines can approximate so that every Filipino can have access to at least basic education. Interactive radio instruction can help to teach children in schools where teachers are inadequately trained and provide them with effective lessons in science, mathematics, language, environmental education and health.

Multichannel Learning for Enhancing the Quality of Educational Outcomes

Multichannel learning has emerged as a promising technology for enhancing the quality of education. It is designed to integrate formal, nonformal and informal learning systems.

Multichannel learning advocates contend that the chances for effective learning are increased when more than one learning channel is harnessed and when the education delivery system is well planned. This has been confirmed by research on the psychology of learning.

Multichannel learning has great potential for contributing to sustainable human development since it provides ample opportunities for learners to acquire desired knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through meaningful experiences in the formal (the first channel), nonformal (the second channel) and informal (the third channel) learning systems. In such an approach, a variety of hard and soft educational technologies ranging from low to high technology and low touch to high touch technology are employed depending upon their appropriateness and affordability.

Multichannel learning functions like various streams that connect learners with sources of knowledge, skills and information in the school, home, community and beyond. The channels may be two or all of the learning systems interlinked to provide rich opportunities for effective experiential learning. These channels can link learners with teachers near and far, other learners and other mediators of learning such as instructional materials, family and community members and other delivery services for knowledge, information and skills.

Some learning channels may be the very same media used in distance education, e.g., radio, video, TV, film and print materials. These channels constitute what multimedia advocates place under the third channel of learning (informal education) which has been defined as "planned but informal learning activities for meeting basic learning needs" (Mayo and Chiew, 1993).

Multi-channel learning is a new term, but its antecedents are found in the long-recognized merit of tearing down the wall between formal and nonformal education. It advocates a paradigm shift from heavy reliance on the formal system to the full integration of formal, nonformal and informal education for greater learning effectiveness.

Ineffective learning in the formal school as well as in literacy classes stems from instruction that continues to rely exclusively or predominantly on a mono-channel of learning, oblivious of the fact that learners have different learning styles and varied capacities for learning. Such obstacles to learning could be overcome by integrating and diversifying learning channels through interactive technologies in which interaction moves from the teacher or facilitator to the learner, learner to learner, learner to materials and other media or influences such as members of the family, community, resource person and community activities.

Other ways of diversifying and integrating learning channels include introduction of games, role play and simulation, group work, buzz groups, story telling and drama, interaction with family and other community members, field trips, and use of

relevant materials and visual aids. These would be applicable to any level of education in the country.

Effective School and Family Partnership: the Desideratum

The family influences and is influenced by the development processes that are transforming the world's economic, social, cultural and political landscape. As the basic unit of society, the family constitutes a critical policy concern.

The World Declaration on Education for All suggests that government should facilitate the integration of the children's learning environment to include community learning programs, thus adopting the idea that a significant part of learning should be cross-generational if communities are to meet the challenge of a rapidly changing world. This confirms the desirability of developing school and family partnerships through the curriculum.

Education, as a key variable in the social and economic development processes, must be alert in developing school-family partnerships which can enhance desirable educational outcomes and in turn strengthen the family. It must support the family as a social unit, promote accurate understanding of family issues especially those that promote sustainable human development, and carry out activities to address such issues and create institutional capabilities for implementing changes calculated to strengthen the family. The following recommendations based on research results on school effectiveness vis-à-vis school and family relationships may be worth considering by school administrators and teachers:

- Develop child-parent cooperation and foster conditions in the home that support learning through participation of parents in school activities in and out of the classroom.
- Get families to teach and monitor learners at home by making them familiar with effective nonformal education strategies and the content of the curriculum.

- Strengthen and coordinate existing home-school-community support services.
- Promote two-way communication between the school and the family through school/student programs.
- Involve parents in instructional support roles in school as well as outside it and show appreciation for their involvement.
- Harness family and community resources to support the school program and activities through known effective strategies.
- Support parents as decision makers for their children's education.
- Provide training in effective parenting.

In crafting a program for effective school-family partnership, it is important to remember that students provide the *raison d'être* of schools. Their wholesome and sustainable development is central to teaching and the curriculum. Their families constitute a valuable resource that can be tapped for education and literacy. The stronger the bonds between the school and the family, the greater is the likelihood that education from such partnership will be meaningful to the learner.

Curriculum Reengineering

Reengineering of the curricula for the children today who will be the architects and builders of Philippine society in 2020 and beyond should benefit from the synergistic efforts of a multisectoral team. Such a team will include a curriculum development planner, subject specialists, a teacher, a school administrator, a parent and representatives of the major sectors of society. Since education is a major factor in personal and national development, the revision of the curricula to attune it to present and emerging needs cannot be left to the education sector alone.

Life in the year 2020 and beyond will require that Filipinos acquire not just basic literacy in

letters and numbers but higher types of literacy as well. They will need social, cultural, political, environmental, scientific and technological literacy in order to fare well in their rapidly changing milieu. It will be necessary for curriculum planners in all four levels of education (pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary) to collaborate in developing a learning continuum in which one level systematically builds on what is learned at a previous level. Sustainable human development would require that those who develop curricula for each level of education be in close communication and collaboration with each other so that the curriculum for the Filipino child can be well-planned and well-focused on the scenario.

In reengineering the curricula for all levels of education, attention must be given to the development of values and skills that would insure that the Filipino becomes a world-class citizen as earlier described.

There will be need to refer to the values, skills and competencies mentioned in the definition of functional literacy and in the sections on the scenario of today's Filipino child in the year 2020 and beyond to gain an idea of what values and skills would need to be integrated and emphasized in the curriculum. The value of risk taking, which is essential in developing entrepreneurship, creativity and inventiveness, productive use of leisure, teamwork, responsible freedom, nationalism, critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills, deserves emphasis in the curriculum. An effective step to take, in determining whether the curriculum developed for the Filipino children today to prepare them for the roles they are expected to play in society in the year 2020 and beyond is appropriate and responsive to their needs, is to check it against the definition of functional literacy and the description of an educated Filipino and Child 21 presented in the first part of this paper. Curriculum and instruction will need to undergo continuing evaluation and adjustment to the emerging needs of the Filipino to insure that the new generation of Filipinos will be adequately equipped to assure a resplendent future for the Philippines.

Lifelong learning – a thrust of the program for education for all – needs to be carefully worked into the curriculum at all levels of education. At the lower levels, training in how to learn and how to continue learning must receive emphasis to insure that the Filipino will not only continue learning upon leaving school but also can learn through distance and other learning strategies. Modern information technology will make distance education more and more available to all. The various technologies will have the advantage of further enhancing education and literacy at the learners' own pace. This will insure that he/she will continue learning throughout life which is the desideratum.

Teachers and Education Officials: Reinvigoration and Renewal

Along with the reengineering of curricula and instructional systems should be the continuing monitoring and evaluation of BESRA, particularly the renewal of the teaching and school management staff's competencies.

As the curricula and instructional system continues to be adjusted to the learning needs of the Filipino child as he/she matures, teachers and school managers will need to be correspondingly renewed in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Teachers will need help to deepen their commitment to the sustainable development of the Filipino child, and school managers will need to be retrained in the ways of transformational leadership in order to achieve greater synergy among their staff. Dynamism should define the process of reinvigorating and renewing the teacher and school managers as professionals. Since change is inevitable, they should be open to desired change. They should not hesitate to explore unbeaten paths to enhance the outcomes of educational efforts.

The most effective way of developing desirable values among the young is to demonstrate such values in the teachers' and school managers' everyday behavior. If children have to be taught the value of being punctual, then their teachers and school heads should make it a point to report

to work on time. If they are to be taught to protect, sustain and improve their environment, then the school and its premises must not only be clean at all times but also be attractive. If they are to be taught to be responsible, then lessons and activities in school should provide opportunities for demonstrating the admirable trait of being responsible. It is not effective to just talk about desirable traits. It is effective to provide situations for such traits to be demonstrated in everyday life.

The provision of salary rates that will not only insure a decent life for teachers and school managers but also attract worthy and competent individuals to the profession would be a necessary step towards developing highly motivated, competent and committed teaching and school management staffs.

Scenario: If EFA 2015 and BESRA Succeed

By the year 2020 and beyond, if the goals of Philippines 2020 are achieved, the country would be a land of abundance where every man, woman and child enjoys three nutritious meals a day, has decent housing, and enjoys easy access to modern transportation and communication facilities as well as other basic services. Malnutrition, water shortage and power outages are things of the past, for the government can then adequately provide for basic services as citizens honestly and regularly pay their taxes.

Since education and literacy targets have been met, every Filipino has acquired at least primary and secondary education and very likely, higher education. The workplace is staffed with skilled manpower as a consequence of the continuously upgraded education and training programs mounted through the years. Both blue and white collar workers possess the work ethic that is the sine qua non for efficiency and effectiveness in the work place. Agriculture and industry yield maximum productivity and bring about a better quality of life for the people. Street children no longer exist because educational services are adequate and parents can afford to send their children to school. The people are highly literate.

Modern information technology is widely employed in both urban and rural areas, so the Filipino can easily access information and utilize it in decision making wherever he/she is. The young as well as adults continue to learn from mass media and from distance education programs which are available in both the city and rural areas. As a consequence, the Filipino in the year 2020 and beyond is well informed, global in outlook and capable of using information in decision making. As a critical thinker, he/she chooses his/her leaders wisely, refrains from selling his/her vote and willingly participates in political/governmental affairs. Gone is his/her feeling of helplessness and despair, for his/her problem-solving skills have empowered him/her to improve his/her situation in life.

In the year 2020 and beyond, the atmosphere would be empty of pollutants, the mountains will be verdant with thick forests and the Pasig River and other waterways would be clear and teeming with fish as efforts to preserve and develop the environment have brought about positive results.

The country would then be a tourists' haven because, unlike in the past, it would now be safe to roam the streets even at night. Criminality has been curbed and the country's natural beauty has been restored.

In spite of modernization, the Filipino in the year 2020 and beyond still retains the values of hospitality, filial love, respect for women and elders, cooperation, concern for others and respect for law and authority. He/she is able to reconcile spiritualism with science and technology and is self-reliant and a risk taker. He/she is proud of his/her country and of its cultural heritage and its people and at the same time is global in outlook.

These are indications that the Filipino child has developed into the kind of human person, citizen and productive individual earlier envisioned. If the Filipino dream has been realized, it can be attributed to the people. The children today will grow and develop and build and nurture the future of Philippine society. Thus, it behooves every Filipino to participate actively in the development of the Filipino child as a measure to achieve

sustainable human development. In contributing to this effort, let us derive inspiration from former President Ramos who said, “Our children should not pay for what we now enjoy, rather they should enjoy what we now pay for.”

Scenario: If EFA 2015 and BESRA Fail

It was earlier indicated that EFA 2015, with the support of its Grand Alliance and BESRA, holds promise of developing today’s children in such a way that they will become assets to society in 2020 and beyond. This section will sketch a picture of Philippine society in 2020 and beyond should such gargantuan plans and efforts to provide good basic education to all children fail.

It must be mentioned that the EFA plan is grounded on the Dakar Framework of Action which the Philippines, as a member of the United Nations (UN), adopted in the year 2000 along with other UN member countries.

The Dakar Framework for Action, specifically the World Declaration on Education for All, documents the rights of every child, youth and adult “to benefit from education that will meet their basic learning needs (BLN) including the full development of their personality.”

The Basic Learning Needs (BLN) consists of the essential learning tools (literacy, numeracy, oral expression and problem solving) and learning content (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that human beings need in order to survive, develop their capacities, live and work with dignity, participate fully in development, improve the quality of their life, make informed decisions and continue learning. The BLN hews to the LCC definition of functional literacy cited earlier.

Schools or formal education, nonformal education and alternative learning schemes are expected to meet the same learning needs. The Philippines, together with the participating countries in the World Education for All Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, committed to pursue the following goals of Education for All programs:

- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensure that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in different circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free and compulsory education of good quality,
- Achieve 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by the year 2015 especially for women and equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015 with a focus on insuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improve every aspect of the quality of education and insure their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The goals indicate that the central goal of EFA 2015 is to provide basic competencies to all children in order to achieve functional literacy and consequently prepare them to comfortably take their place in society.

What would happen if BESRA and consequently EFA 2015 fail? What would Philippine society be like in 2020 and beyond if the EFA goals are not achieved?

Here is a scenario of such an unfortunate situation which we must all work hard to prevent from happening, if we dream of a resplendent future for our country in 2020 and beyond.

Should BESRA fail to make possible the attainment of EFA goals, our dream of a resplendent Philippine society in 2020 and beyond will likely fleet away.

Filipino citizens to some extent shall be wanting in self-confidence to face an uncertain future as a consequence of the failure of the school, family and social and other government institutions to help meet their basic learning needs and fully develop their personality. They generally have not fully shaken off their feeling of inferiority when interacting with foreigners and distinguished individuals because of their unproductive recollection of past failures on account of inadequate skills and knowledge. Also, the awareness that their country has been listed among the most corrupt in the world has largely exacerbated their feeling of inferiority. Their failure to acquire higher and more cognitive skills and develop flexibility and adaptability has made it difficult for them to continue learning throughout life.

A large segment of the population of graduates of high school and higher education institutions are either unemployed or underemployed because the government has failed to fulfill its promise of creating enough jobs for its people. While there are some good jobs available, not many people possess the special skills that they require. The absence of proper career guidance prior to graduation from high school and college accounts for the proclivity for white collar jobs. College graduates unable to find employment in the country are constrained to seek employment overseas and usually are overqualified for the jobs they get. Thus, a teacher may be employed as a domestic worker in Singapore, Hong Kong or Dubai. It is not uncommon to find a medical doctor working as a nurse in the U.S.A, Canada or England, a commerce graduate working as a driver in the Middle East. The paucity of appropriate jobs for the country's many degree holders is a consequence of its sluggish development.

Poverty, malnutrition and poor health are commonplace especially in the urban slums and in underdeveloped sites in the countryside. The city and provincial jails are literally bursting in the seams because abject poverty has driven many indigent people to steal, kill and commit crimes such as drug pushing, robbery, estafa and kidnapping for ransom.

Street children roam the streets in cities begging for alms, and street dwellers mar the beauty of major thoroughfares in cities and large towns begging for alms and positioning their push carts, which serve as their homes, where traffic is unusually heavy and where they have ample opportunity for selling their wares or begging.

The free wards of hospitals are often crowded because of the high incidence of sickness among the poor. While the rich have apparently set their hearts on having small families, the poor have maximally contributed to a galloping population growth rate which has made it impossible for government to adequately provide budgetary support for education, health and sanitation for all.

Inefficiency of most government workers has exacerbated the misery of the poorer sections of the population. When a flood occurs, or strong winds threaten the shacks of the poor, they are forced to evacuate to the public school in their community. Government is usually slow in providing assistance to make them warm and secure in the evacuation center because it is often short of resources.

Education still claims the largest share in the national budget, yet many of the public schools are still under-equipped and overcrowded because the government cannot as yet adequately provide sufficient funds for basic education on account of the country's galloping population growth rate. Scant and outmoded educational resources have impeded the improvement of learning outcomes of Filipino children and limited the outreach of schools in hard-to-reach areas. A significant portion of the disadvantaged population – nomadic tribes, indigenous people, those with disabilities and those who live far from the schools – have yet to enjoy the blessings of basic education.

The dream of a resplendent future for the Philippines in the year 2020 and beyond has not been realized in spite of Projects BESRA and EFA 2015. This may be attributed to weak social advocacy for EFA, failure to maintain the continued support of business and the community for EFA, lack of determination to succeed and absence of

dynamism on the part of the leaders at different levels (national, regional, division, city/municipality and barangay), inadequate fund support, weak monitoring and evaluation of programs, inefficiency of the school systems, ineffective quality assurance efforts, the reluctance of some people involved in education to welcome change and innovation, and the waning support of the Grand Alliance for EFA 2015.

Let this grim scenario convey the need for effective social advocacy for any plan or effort to provide education envisioned to equip learners for improving the quality of their lives and, consequently, that of society and for their important role of nation building, for a nation can be as good only as its people.

Some Legislative and Multi-Sectoral Policy and Program Options

The scenario earlier drawn up for a situation in which Education for All 2015 (EFA 2015) and Basic Education Reform Agenda (BESRA) fail calls attention to the need for the collaborative efforts of all sectors of Philippine society – the national and local governments, Congress, non-government organizations, the business sector and all of civil society – to support basic education, the necessary ingredient for developing the children and youth into good Filipino citizens. This gargantuan responsibility should not be the DepEd's alone. All of society must be actively involved in it if today's children are expected to be the architects and builders of Philippine society in 2020 and beyond.

Multi-sectoral collaboration in the direction of the goals and targets of education and literacy may be realized to some extent through an effective social advocacy program and strong education leadership, but unless there is well-intentioned national policy and legislative support, it may not be possible to maximize performance towards educational goals set. Functional literacy for all would continue to be a moving target and, consequently, the full development of the citizenry and ultimately the Philippines may remain just a rosy dream.

Congress

Below are suggestions for legislative options that Congress may wish to consider for maximizing its contribution to the development of Filipino children whom our greatest hero, Jose Rizal, described as the “hope of our fatherland.”

- Enact a law that will ensure that every appointee to the position of Secretary of Education shall serve for at least eight years to ensure continuity of leadership in raising the quality of education. He/ she shall be required to submit an annual report on progress vis-à-vis legitimate goals and objectives.
- Put more teeth in the compulsory primary education law so that parents will realize their important responsibility to the State and to their children to send them to school and keep them there until they acquire primary and secondary education.

One form of punishment for law evaders who cannot afford to pay a fine may be provision of community service, such as repairing roads, beautifying/ cleaning a public place, school ground improvement, repairing government buildings, garbage collection/ disposal, etc.

- Enact a law to integrate early childhood education with primary school education to insure that every child will be better prepared for basic education.
- Provide adequate funding for the alternative learning system (ALS) so that it can provide nonformal education to the large number of school dropouts, individuals who never had the opportunity for schooling for various reasons, such as distance of home from school, illness, physical disability, poverty, hazards caused by man and nature, and unmet special needs.

- Provide a special budget that will allow the alternative learning system to upgrade its program, develop instructional and test materials, and make it possible to increase the frequency of administering the accreditation and equivalency examination until such time that it will be possible to accommodate walk-in examinees in testing centers at any time of the year.
- Promulgate a population program that will be acceptable to all to ensure a school population size which the government can adequately support.
- Provide funding support for establishing and expanding distance learning programs in the primary and secondary schools to broaden opportunities for more effective learning and increasing participation rates.
- Tighten censorship of programs on radio, TV and film to insure that the young do not get exposed to programs inimical to the development of desirable values. Eliminate programs that glorify criminals and reward immoral behavior, corruption, and destruction of the environment, and show disloyalty to the country.
- Allocate a larger budget for education, one that approximates the budgets of Southeast Asian countries whose students fare extremely well at home and in international examinations, such as Malaysia and Singapore which are provided adequate fund support for basic education.
- Restore seventh grade in the elementary school system to raise the quality of educational achievement of Filipino learners who would then be better prepared for high school
- Make tax-deductible all business and private sector contributions for improving basic education.

Options for DepEd and other Members of the Grand Alliance for EFA 2015

- Strengthen school-community organizations in order to actively involve all parents and guardians in school improvement and in raising the achievement level of learners.
- Get the whole country involved in developing today's children into world-class citizens appreciative of their culture and capable of using their functional literacy skills to improve the quality of their life and that of society through the efforts of all government sectors. Employ innovative ways of winning greater support of all for education.
- Develop a strategic communication plan to support a five-year national functional literacy campaign. This may be assigned to the Literacy Coordinating Council, which is attached to the Department of Education. The Philippine Information Agency, a member of the Council, may provide leadership in its implementation.
- Actively promote multichannel learning to enhance optimum learning of good quality by integrating formal, nonformal and informal ways of teaching. Provide teachers and school managers effective training in multichannel learning approaches.
- Install an effective monitoring and evaluation system that will periodically report to the people progress in attaining the goals of EFA 2015 and BESRA.
- Devise easy-to-read news items to inform the people about the progress in providing basic education to all. They must be brief and written simply in a manner that will whet the interest of the people to read them and appreciate being informed about developments in education.

- Promote strong and effective school-family-community partnerships to support the government's Education for All program in order to achieve its thrust of raising the country's literacy rate by 50 percent by the year 200. This may be a cooperative endeavor of the Department of Education and the Literacy Coordinating Council.
- Get the Literacy Coordinating Council, which is attached to the DepEd, to coordinate with the League of Cities of the Philippines and the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, and insure that they will actively support the goals of the Education for All (EFA) 2015 National Action Plan and the LCC campaign for universalizing literacy. Convince the local governments to use their internal revenue allotment for supporting projects under EFA and BESRA.

The mayors, barangay chairmen and councilors are in a strategic position to support the goals of EFA and the Literacy Coordinating Council's goal of increasing the literacy rate of Filipinos by 50 percent in the year 2015 – a millennium development goal to which the Philippines is committed. A specific advocacy program

addressed to them will very likely make them realize how important their role is in developing our children into potential builders of a progressive nation.

- Give prestigious recognition to teachers, school officials, and other responsibility bearers who have done remarkable work in raising learner participation rates and for raising the quality of educational outputs of a school, division or region or who have made disadvantaged groups of learners (e.g., indigenous people, the handicapped, isolated groups of learners, and learners with special problems) functionally literate.

The progress of the Philippines from its present third world status to a developed nation in 2020 and beyond lies in how well we nurture our children today into functionally literate citizens who are well equipped to live and work as human persons, capable of making critical and informed decisions, and functioning effectively in society within the context of their environment and of the wider community in order to improve the quality not only of their lives but also that of our society. Such a gargantuan task deserves the wholehearted support not only of government functionaries but of all country-loving Filipinos as well.



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The Role of Social Protection in Upholding Child Rights

By Alicia R. Bala

Introduction

Existing and emerging threats to children's rights cannot be separated from social welfare and development issues facing the country today. The Social Welfare and Development (SWD) section of Megatrends 1 has shown us how macro-level phenomena such as rapid advancement in Internet and mobile technology, growth in the tourism industry, massive labor migration, and the increasing poverty incidence rates amidst economic gains have affected children the most. And these macro-level phenomena, which were observed in Megatrends 1, are still true today. Moreover, these trends have resulted in emerging threats to children's rights that require not just interventions from the SWD services alone, but convergent action involving government's various social protection programs as well as assistance from civil society and the private sector

Social Welfare Trends and Emerging Threats

A. Prevalence of Poverty and Socioeconomic Insecurity

Eradicating poverty continues to be one of the country's biggest challenges. The 2007 Census of Population identified about 1.7 million households as poor. Moreover, latest poverty statistics reflect that the country's poverty incidence rate among families has increased from 24.4 percent in 2003 to 26.9 percent in 2006, while the poverty incidence among the population also rose during

the same period from 30.0 percent to 32.9 percent. Also for the same period, the magnitude of poor families rose from 4.0 million to 4.7 million families while the magnitude of poor population increased from 23.8 million to 27.6 million individuals.

According to the 2006 Official Poverty Statistics for the Basic Sectors, there is also a rise in poverty incidence among all basic sectors with fisherfolk (from 43.6% to 49.9%), farmers (from 42.4% to 44.0%) and children (from 38.8% to 40.8%) comprising the top three sectors. Also, children, women and urban poor accounted for the largest number of poor population at 14.4 million, 12.8 million and 6.9 million, respectively.¹ This signifies that poverty impacts on children the most since it is one of the sectors with the highest poverty incidence and accounts for one of the highest magnitude of poor population.

B. The Child Development Index

The 2006 Child Development Index (CDI) shows that the country's achievement in children's development slightly deteriorated by 0.003 index points between the years 2000 and 2003, and by 0.050 index points between 2003 and 2006. This means that the human development of the country's children has been worsening since the year 2000. (See Table 1.)

Further, the number of regions that rated high in CDI continually decreased between the period 2000 and 2006. (See Table 2.)

Index	2000	2003	2006	Difference	
				2000–2003	2000–2003
Child Development Index	0.782	0.779	0.729	(0.003)	(0.050)
Child Health Index	0.0982	0.987	0.988	0.005	0.001
Child Education Index	0.790	0.739	0.607	(0.051)	(0.132)
Quality of Life Index	0.575	0.612	0.592	0.037	(0.020)

Year	Low (<0.5)		Medium (0.5<0.8)		Low (<0.8<1.0)		Total Regions
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
2006	-	-	16	94.1	1	5.9	17
2003	-	-	14	82.4	3	17.6	17
2000	-	-	12	70.6	5	29.4	17

C. Pursuit of Overseas Work

The 2008 Implementation Report on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the Sale of Child, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography notes that poverty has pushed millions of Filipino workers to leave their families in pursuit of substandard but better-paying jobs overseas. Several studies have enumerated the cost of migration on children left behind. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - Abstract of Existing Studies on the Impact of Migration on Filipino Children Left Behind, though there are conflicting reports as to the effects of migration on the psychosocial and emotional well-being of children, what is consistent is that those children whose mothers had migrated expressed lower levels of happiness, seem to have more problems, are inclined to be more angry, confused, apathetic and more afraid than other children, and felt neglected or abandoned, lonely, unloved, unfeeling, worried and different from other children. They display poorer social adjustment and experience delayed social and psychological development. As a result, maternal absence could

be most disruptive and problematic in the lives of these children.²

Threats of overseas migration to the stability of the family include: 1) separation of family members which disregards the ideal or the value of close family ties, 2) increasing instances of marital conflict and breakdown of marital relations due to lack of communication and prolonged separation, 3) incidence of substance abuse, delinquency, early pregnancies and child abuse among children of migrant workers, 4) adherence to materialistic orientation, over-dependence on money and other material presents from overseas, 5) children are socialized to believe that overseas migration is the only solution to improve their lives, 6) changes in gender roles and increasing number of single-parent households, which is a deviation from the ideal setup of a family where both parents are present, 7) relations among relatives and community are also affected as families of migrant workers are being sought by relatives for financial help and also become subject of gossip concerning affairs of separated spouses.³

D. Violence Against Children

1. In Schools⁴

A study on child abuse and discipline by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) in collaboration with UNICEF and the Philippine Women's University highlights that incidence of violence is usually experienced by children through corporal punishment. Forms of violence such as spanking, beating, pinching or slapping are tolerated and "socialized" as acceptable ways of disciplining children. Other than that, cursing and shouting at a child are seen as "natural reactions" to situations or normal expressions of anger. Indeed, verbal abuse, which also includes being ridiculed, teased, or humiliated, is the most prevalent form of violence experienced by children in all school levels. The "silent treatment" or not being spoken to is not at all perceived as emotional abuse. Male children are most likely to experience physical violence than female children. The perpetrators of such acts or omissions are no less than the children's peers or their immediate mentors.

Other key findings show that at least 40 percent of children in Grades 1-3 and 70 percent in both Grades 4-6 and high school have experienced violence of some form in school. The degree or gravity and incidence of abuse increase as a child graduates from one level to the next. Both male and female children experience verbal sexual harassment. Incidence of violence is higher in urban than in rural areas. Many acts of violence among children such as bullying are perceived as petty quarrels.

The Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists of the Philippines, Inc. (CAPPI) has estimated that between 500 to 800 child abuse cases are committed by teachers each year. According to the 2006 CAPPI Survey, 50 percent of perpetrators of child abuse in the school setting are committed by teachers, while a few involved janitors, bus drivers and other school personnel.⁵

The Service Manual for Teachers provides that a teacher may be dismissed on the grounds of slapping, jerking or pushing a student, imposing tasks as penalty, and meting out cruel and unusual punishment to any student. Sadly, addressing complaints on violence against children is vulnerable to the personal biases and arbitrary judgment of people in charge because most public schools do not follow the standard way of resolving them. This results in children's distrust of the process. In addition, adults make allowances for corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure as long as it does not entail any wounding or bruises.

2. In Homes⁶

The above findings echo the research conducted by Save the Children-Sweden entitled Comparative Research on the Physical and Emotional Punishment of Children (2005) and participated in by eight countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Region including the Philippines. It shows that methods of punishment are very similar across the region, i.e., spanking, hitting with specific objects like stick or belt, punching, kicking, and verbal assault. Breaking house rules, misdemeanors and misbehaving, and failure to do house chores or assigned tasks are the common causes given why children are punished.

In both settings, participating children accept these physical and verbal forms of violence as part of disciplining. However, children also prefer a more positive form of discipline such as being talked to, explaining nicely, giving advice, teaching what is good, understanding and forgiving, caring for and loving the child, saying sorry, and praising.

While Republic Act 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act indicates that corporal punishment is a form of child abuse, there is yet no law prohibiting corporal punishment in the homes, schools, and other institutional settings. Several existing

Philippine laws related to discipline and punishment of children within the family were reviewed and analyzed by Save the Children-UK in 2006. It was discovered that these provisions are too general and vague for parents to be guided properly in balancing their right to discipline their children and their duty to protect the physical and human integrity of children.

E. Child Labor

In the 2001 Philippine Survey on Working Children, 16.2 percent of children 5-17 years old were shown to be economically active. They are mostly male with median age between 10-17 years old, have elementary school education and are usually based in the rural areas. Majority of these children are laborers and unskilled workers engaged in agriculture on seasonal basis and are unpaid in their own household-operated farm or business. A quarter of these working children worked in the evening or during night, and about 60 percent of them are working in unsafe environments—i.e., exposed to physical, chemical or biological hazards.

F. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

1. Child Trafficking and Children in Prostitution

While the exact figures of child victims of trafficking, prostitution, and child pornography have not been established, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has recorded 3,231 cases of child abuse in 2008, wherein 1,322 were sexually abused and exploited, and 133 children were victims of illegal recruitment, child labor and trafficking.⁶ Meanwhile, the 2004 figures of the Child Protection Unit (CPU) Network reveal that there is an increase in the number of child abuse cases handled by members of CPU from 2004 to 2006, as shown in the following: 3,797 cases in 2004, 4,034 cases in 2005, and 4,120 cases in 2006. Sexual abuse comprises 70 percent of the total reported cases during this period.⁷

Based on case studies conducted by UNICEF in 2001, child victims of trafficking were found to be predominantly young girls between 14-17 years old who had been deceived by recruiters with promises of better opportunities to earn. Children in prostitution are enticed because they want to augment family income, come from unstable family relationships, or are pressured by their own peers. Based on a survey done in 2004, most documented cases of child pornography have been initiated by foreigners with Filipino accomplices.⁸

According to Human Rights Information and Documentation System (HURIDOCs) data and findings of a study done by Coalition Against Trafficking of Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP), victims of trafficking and prostitution reached 287 between June 2006 and May 2007 alone. Of this number, 43.6 percent with known birth date are minors at the time of their victimization, with a 10-year-old girl as the youngest. Those who are minor-looking refuse to reveal their real age for fear that their parents who induced them into prostitution might be prosecuted.⁹

2. Child Pornography

The wide reach of Internet and mobile technology, while linking OFWs to their families across the globe, has also resulted in the proliferation of cyber-pornography, including child pornography. There are even big-time publishers of pornographic magazines and tabloids that feature models in their teens.¹⁰ But despite these hurdles, the country has continued to be vigilant in its efforts to protect children. Notably, in 2004, a member of a syndicate involved in the country's largest case of child pornography, which had victimized at least 70 children, were arrested.¹¹

Effects on child victims may include overwhelming feelings of self-blame and shame, being haunted by their experience, incapacity to forge relationships with others, maladjustment, instability, and emotional

damage that manifests in depression, low self-esteem, guilt, psychiatric illness or disturbed behavior. They may also endure abusive relationships, blame themselves for their problems, and feel powerless to take action and improve their lives.¹²

Children of well-to-do families are as vulnerable as poor children to be victims of pornography because these children may be exposed to pornographic materials, including child pornography, through the Internet. These pornographic materials are also sometimes sold openly in the streets. This raises a concern over potentially desensitizing children into believing that pornography is normal.¹³

According to the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative Studies (UP-CIDS) report on Child Pornography in the Philippines (2005) funded by UNICEF, challenges that need to be hurdled in combating child pornography are the following:

- Child pornography is inadequately understood and is a covert issue that pictures naked children as harmless and inoffensive, and victims of such exploitation remain hidden unless reported;
- Difficulty in identifying the victims, perpetrators and clients of child pornography;
- Difficulty in determining the age of child victims especially those who have reached physical maturity;
- Advancement in technology contributes to the difficulty in defining child pornography and its various forms;
- Lack of knowledge and access in the use of technology;
- Association of child pornography with other forms of sexual exploitation;
- Deceptive statistics on child pornography;
- Refusal of Internet service providers (ISPs) and credit card companies to cooperate;
- Need for international cooperation;
- Confusion in the separation between art, media and child pornography; and
- Lapses in law enforcement and weaknesses of the justice system

G. Street Children

Street children in the Philippines are estimated to be 246,000 according to a UNICEF study in 2001. About 50,000 of them are considered “highly visible street children,” who are mostly on the streets, have little or no family contacts, and are highly vulnerable to risks. More than 67 percent of these kids are male, averaging 14.6 years old. All are living in poverty and malnourished, with little education and high dropout rates. Survival strategies of these children include: begging; selling newspapers, cigarettes, flowers and chewing gum; washing and watching cars; shining shoes; carrying bags for grocery- and market-goers; scavenging for recyclable materials’ and even pickpocketing, snatching and involvement in drug pushing and prostitution.¹⁴

Stairway Foundation has categorized street children as follows: a) children on the streets – those working on the streets but do not live there, b) children of the streets – those that make the streets their home and unite with other fellow street children as family, though some may still have contacts with their own families, and c) completely abandoned children – those with no family ties and are entirely on their own.¹⁵

H. Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL)

Offenses against property seem to be most dominant among the types of offenses committed by CICL. This may be attributed to “survival offending,” i.e., committing a violation or offense

while in the process of carrying out one's livelihood or as an act of survival.¹⁶

Ninety percent (90%) of CICL are mostly male between 14 to 17 years old and come from poor families. Philippine data indicate that many CICL reached elementary schooling and majority of them are out-of-school at the time they were apprehended. Loss of interest in schooling has been identified as the primary reason for dropping out of school, next only to financial difficulties.¹⁷

Among the risk factors identified as contributing to delinquency in the Alampay (2005) study are: 1) inadequate and hostile parenting practices, 2) child maltreatment and abuse, 3) family stressors such as poverty, unemployment and marital conflict, and 4) family structure and demographics. In local studies, families of CICL are characterized by conflict, maltreatment, neglect and disorganization. Eighty percent (80%) of those studied reported to have experienced violence and abuse in the hands of their parents.

As of December 2008, there was a total of 4,392 CICL recorded by JJWC. Out of this number, 2,355 are under the care of the DSWD. Absence of local Youth Homes can be cited as reason for continued presence of CICL in jails. However, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) ensures that CICL not yet committed to DSWD centers are separated from adult offenders.

I. Children in Situations of Emergency

1. Children in Armed Conflict (CIAC)¹⁸

About 30,000 to 50,000 children have been displaced by armed conflict every year during the last four years. They have lost their support systems and security of normal family and community relationships, are cut off from familiar surroundings, suffer serious psychosocial stress, experience school disruption, and usually seek refuge in overcrowded evacuation centers where adequate health and water sanitation services are limited. Children in conflict areas also experience the threat of human rights

violations especially those suspected of giving support to armed groups and whose parents and siblings are suspected members of insurgent or rebel groups.

As of 2008, a total of 269 CIAC cases have been reported since 1989. Based on these figures, the Inter-Agency Committee on CIAC prepared a CIAC profile by region, year, sex, and educational attainment.

2. Child Victims of Disaster

Natural disasters such as typhoons disrupt the normal day-to-day activities of children such as school attendance and the security of a home. This is due to destroyed houses and facilities and the use of school buildings as evacuation centers by most LGUs during disaster operation. Also, inadequate health and water sanitation services pose health risks to children, and floods may induce water-borne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, amoebiasis, dysentery, and leptospirosis. Added to these is the trauma of losing a home and sometimes even a family member which is experienced by children during these events.

J. Children with Disabilities¹⁹

Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) assumption that 10 percent of every country's given population has some form of disability, the National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA) has estimated about eight million Filipinos with disabilities. However, according to the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, there were only 948,098 persons with disabilities or a mere 1.23 percent of the population (75.3 million) that same year. Seventy percent (70%) of persons with disabilities were found in rural and remote areas of the country. Out of that number, 191,680 were children 18 years old and below with 103,435 males and 88,245 females. Table 3 shows the distribution of children with disabilities by age group and type of disability.

Table 3. Children with Disabilities by Age Group and Type of Disability

Type of Disability	Under 1	1–4	5–9	10–14	15–19
Total blindness	428	2,041	3,455	2,921	2,798
Partial blindness	716	3,260	4,449	4,646	4,272
Low vision	817	3,776	4,716	5,864	6,089
Total deafness	260	1,526	3,683	4,387	3,589
Partial deafness	193	1,079	2,322	2,707	2,230
Hard of hearing	46	331	992	1,312	1,001
Oral defect	797	3,575	7,071	7,482	5,895
Loss of one or both arms/hands	674	2,822	3,515	3,258	3,021
Loss of one or both legs/feet	150	1,019	2,952	2,884	2,785
Quadriplegic	206	2,517	5,524	5,498	4,402
Mentally retarded	199	2,439	7,793	10,743	9,077
Mentally ill	1,195	4,516	4,644	5,638	5,680
Multiple impairment	225	1,359	2,229	2,232	1,987
TOTAL	5,906	30,260	53,345	59,532	52,826

Source: National Statistics Office, Special Report on Persons with Disability, 2001.

K. Children of Indigenous Peoples²⁰

About 10-15 percent of the total population or about 12 million comprise indigenous peoples representing 110 ethno-linguistic groups, 5.1 million of whom are ages 18 years old and below. Though exact figures are not available, infant mortality rates, child mortality rates and maternal mortality rates are higher among IPs than among the majority of the population. Birth registration is also lower and availability and access to health, nutrition, water and sanitation services remain to be a concern. For the school year 2003-2004, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) records show that only 5,252 children 18 years and below were in school, which is less than one percent of the total population of IP children.

L. Risk Behaviors among Youth²¹

Youth exposure to the adult world through the mass media, before being prepared for it, lures adolescents to partake in unsafe activities such as sex and substance abuse. The Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Survey

(YAFSS) of 2002 indicates that 11.8 percent of adolescents 15-19 years old reported having had premarital sex; 72.5 percent of males and 51.6 percent of females had tried drinking alcohol; 50.1 percent of males and 19.8 percent of females currently drink alcohol; 11 percent of males and 1.8 percent of females have tried illegal drugs; and 3.6 percent of males and 0.4 percent of females are using illegal drugs. What is alarming is that the rates for engaging in premarital sexual experience and for all types of substance abuse rose compared to the 1994 YAFSS.

The threats to children's rights due to current trends in technology, migration and poverty require urgent and innovative responses in policies and programs for children. While this doesn't mean that existing laws and programs are ineffective, this situation does emphasize the need for a social protection framework that will connect and synergize various efforts already in place for children's rights. This paper aims to illustrate how the four components of social protection work together to create comprehensive policies and programs for children.

Social Protection and Child Rights

The Philippines is a signatory to major international instruments on children such as the following:

- a. Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified on July 26, 1990
- b. Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, ratified on April 23, 2002
- c. Protocol to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime to Prevent and Suppress Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, ratified on May 28, 2002
- d. ILO Convention Nos. 138 and 182, ratified on June 4, 1998 and November 11, 2000, respectively

These international commitments are translated into concrete policies and programs implemented by government, NGOs, and civic groups. Viewing these policies and programs in the context of a social protection framework will provide readers with a better appreciation of how government, NGO, and civil society initiatives converge to uphold children's rights.

A. Definition of Social Protection

The National Economic and Development Authority Social Development Committee (NEDA-SDC) Cabinet Level issued Resolution No. 1 Series of 2007, which defines social protection as follows:

Social Protection constitutes policies and programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protecting against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people's capacity to manage risks.

The Philippine definition of social protection has four components: social welfare, labor market interventions, social insurance, and social safety nets. With these four components, social

protection deals with both absolute deprivation and vulnerability of the poorest. Further, in July 2008, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Administrative Orders No. 232 and 232-A on the clustering of social welfare reforms into a National Social Welfare Program (NSWP). The NSWP, chaired by the head of the Social Security System (SSS), with the DSWD exercising coordination and secretariat functions, has adopted the Social Protection Framework as shown in Figure 1.

B. Policies and Programs for Children Within the Context of a Social Protection Framework

1. Social Welfare

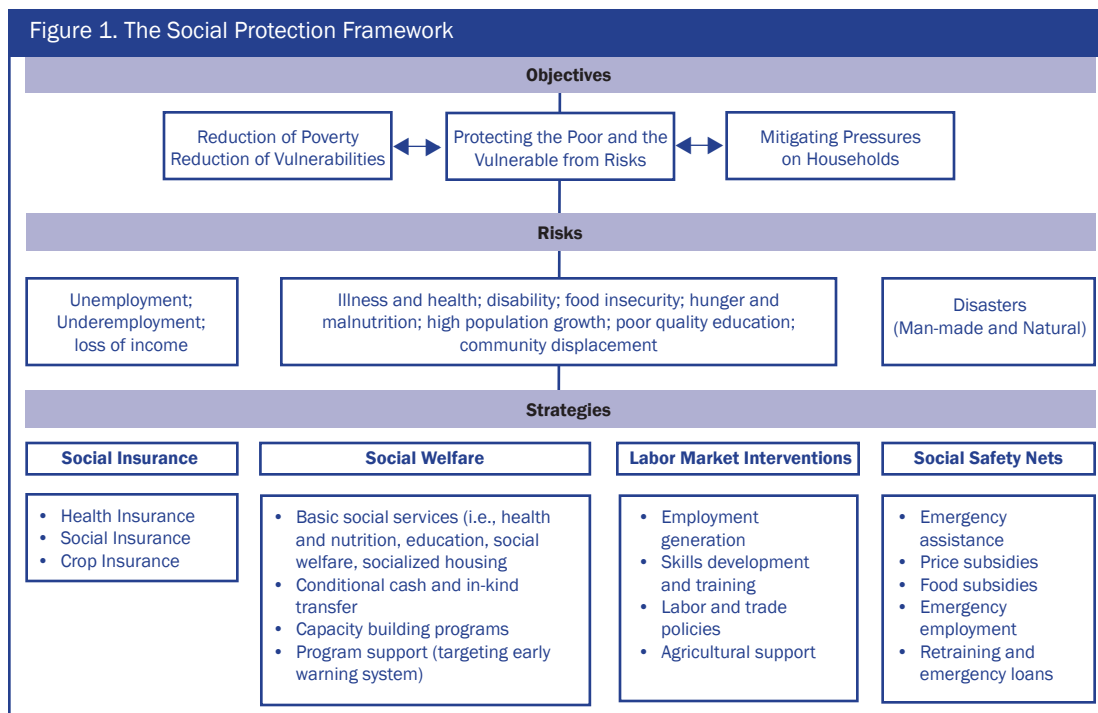
The social welfare component of social protection consists of **preventive and developmental interventions** that seek to support the minimum basic requirements of the poor, particularly the poorest of the poor, and reduce risks associated with unemployment, resettlement, marginalization, illness, disability, old age and loss of family care. Social welfare and assistance programs usually comprise direct assistance in the form of **cash or in-kind transfers** to the poorest and marginalized groups, as well as social services including family and community support, alternative care and referral services.

- a. *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*

A notable example of such innovative programs is the DSWD's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) conditional cash transfer (CCT). The 4Ps is a social assistance and social development program that aims to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by providing families with means to develop their human capital. This program includes conditionalities that beneficiaries have to comply with. Otherwise, they will be terminated from the program. These conditionalities are as follows:

- Pregnant women must get pre- and post-natal care and be attended by a skilled/ trained health professional during childbirth;

Figure 1. The Social Protection Framework



- Parents or guardians must attend responsible parenthood sessions, mother's classes, and parent effectiveness seminars;
- Children 0-5 years old must receive regular preventive health checkups and vaccines;
- Children 3-5 years old must attend day care at least 85 percent of the time;
- Children 6 to 14 years old must enroll in elementary or high school and attend at least 85 percent of the time; and
- Children 0-14 years old must avail of deworming pills every five months.

Simply put, poor households with children 0-14 years old and/ or pregnant women will be eligible for a health transfer currently set at PhP 500 per household per month (PhP 6,000 per year) regardless of the number of children 0-14 years old. On the other hand, the education transfer

is set at PhP 300 per month, for a period of 10 months/year (PhP 3,000 per year) for up to a maximum of three children. Each child between 6-14 years old of beneficiary households will receive the education transfer for as long as they are enrolled in primary and secondary school and maintain a class attendance rate of 85 percent every month. Each household beneficiary will receive the cash grants for at most five years. Accordingly, these cash grants are meant for the poor to invest in health, nutrition and education of children – human development needs that are usually sacrificed by poor families in their struggle to put food on the table.

As of June 2009, the 4Ps has provided cash grants to 695,746 poorest households from 17 regions, 45 provinces, 15 cities and 255 municipalities in the country. A total of 700,000 households are targeted to benefit from this program by the end of 2009. Close to one million poor children are expected to benefit from this program.

*b. Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-
Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of
Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS)*

In order to facilitate the delivery of social services, the government's flagship poverty-alleviation project, the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS), which is implemented by the DSWD through the financial support of the World Bank, has completed 4,758 subprojects in 4,917 barangays (villages) from 183 municipalities in 43 poorest provinces as of June 2009.

Of these subprojects, those directly benefiting children include school buildings (523), day care centers (402), health stations (385), water sanitation projects (1,037), roads and infrastructure projects (1,260), and electrification projects (88).

Other subprojects with indirect benefits to children and their families include community economic enterprise training (117), small-scale irrigation (46), and environmental protection projects (448). The Kalahi-CIDSS has benefited a cumulative total of 985,893 households from 2006 to June 2009.²²

c. Country Programme for Children (CPC) 6²³

CPC 6 (2004-2009) aims to reduce the disparities between the basic indicators in 24 focused areas (consisting of 19 provinces and five cities) and the national data for health, nutrition, education, ECCD and protection indicators by at least 50 percent by the end of 2009 from 2003 levels. This also intends to contribute to improving the national data and to achieving the MDGs.

CPC 6 has six program components, namely:

- Health and Nutrition Programme aims to reduce infant and under-five mortality rates and child and maternal under-nutrition in the focus areas.
- Education Programme seeks to increase access and participation in early childhood

care and development, enrolment in primary school, and completion of primary school.

- Child Protection Programme aspires to identify children who are vulnerable to and are victims of abuse, exploitation and violence through preventive actions and early interventions.
- HIV/AIDS Programme strives to enable the most at-risk children and youth in focus areas to protect themselves from HIV and risk factors for HIV infection.
- Communication Programme seeks to increase the population's basic understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and generate commitment from policy and decision makers to create a safe and protection environment for children.
- Local Policy and Institutional Development Programme aims to increase investments and enforce child-friendly policies and accountability for improving the situation of children in local government units.

The overall program strategies built on those developed in the previous program, CPC 5, consist of: (a) a human rights-based approach to policy and program development; (b) capacity building with priority given to institutions, systems and duty bearers in the most disadvantaged 30 percent of barangays in the focus areas; (c) expanding partnerships and alliances to scale up the Child Friendly Movement (CFM) and reach more underserved children and mothers; (d) leveraging more resources for children; (e) providing support to targeted and convergent policies and basic services; (f) developing and implementing joint programming initiatives with other UN agencies; (g) strengthening program communication and young people's participation; (h) advocacy and political mobilization at all administrative levels; and, (i) scaling up CFM through child-friendly governance in a rights-based context.

d. Interventions for the Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation such as Child Trafficking and Child Pornography

In regard to the prevention of child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), the National Framework of Action Against CSEC (FAACSEC) covering the period 2000-2004 is currently being updated. Related programs in the area of tourism and information technology and advocacy campaigns have likewise been undertaken.

The Department of Tourism's (DOT) Child Wise Tourism Project highlights the value of ensuring the safety of children in tourist destinations. It provides training which enhance the capabilities of tourism personnel, hotel and restaurant staff, and even taxi drivers to give immediate intervention to reported cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse. On enhancing corporate social responsibility, the DOT has improved its standards for licensing and accreditation of tourism establishments to include child protection measures and promotion of The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. These measures have been incorporated in the newly-developed Philippine Ecotourism Standards. The Amended Omnibus Guidelines for Minors Traveling Abroad was also issued in 2006 to prevent cross-border trafficking of children.

Cognizant that child pornography is a "new dimension" of the forms of CSEC, the Philippines has conducted various researches providing evidence-based actions addressing child pornography in the Philippines. In addition to the 2005 rapid appraisal study entitled Child Pornography in the Philippines, CWC with the support of UNICEF has undertaken at least two recent studies on child pornography—an investigative study on the modus operandi of perpetrators and another study on risk and protective factors that influence the victimization of children. These studies are now being used as basis of awareness-raising efforts and the drafting of a communication plan on child pornography. Relatedly, both the Senate and

House of Representatives are deliberating on the comprehensive bill on anti-child pornography. This law is projected to be enacted before the 14th Congress ends.

In the aspect of information technology or I.T., the ECPAT Philippines has been conducting the Make IT Safe Campaign, which educates the private sector (i.e., Internet café owners, Internet service providers), children and young people about protecting children from violence in cyberspace, including child pornography. This has led to self-regulation of the private sector through the adoption of the I-Café Code of Conduct for I-Café Operators and Owners in the Philippines.

Government, with the support of NGOs, has also started measures to empower children by disseminating information materials that teach children to protect themselves from harm. Notable examples are the Personal Safety Lessons (PSL), which has been integrated in the school curriculum of selected provinces, as well as the Manual on Protective Behavior. Advocacy campaigns on children's rights and issues, such as the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women (November 25-December 12), the National Awareness Week for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (second week of February, Protection and Gender-Fair Treatment of the Girl Child Week (fourth week of March), and Adoption Consciousness Day (first Saturday of February) are also carried out regularly by government agencies, LGUs, and NGOs.²⁴

e. Access to Justice for the Poor

Aside from disseminating information materials and advocacy campaigns, the capacity of poor women and children to take recourse in the law has also been strengthened through the Access to Justice for the Poor Project. This project, which began its operational implementation in 2004, has been undertaken with the support of the European Commission. The project covers five provinces, namely Oriental Mindoro, Camarines Sur, Capiz, Lanao del Norte, and Sultan Kudarat, and encompasses 756 barangays in 36 municipalities. Its objectives include enabling the poor in the above areas to pursue justice through

increasing their knowledge about their basic rights and the judicial system, creating an enabling and supportive environment within the judiciary and law enforcement institutions, and providing an overall framework to ensure the rights of poor women and children.

Among its accomplishments include: the issuance of a memorandum circular by the Supreme Court on the implementation of information, education and communication (IEC) guidelines, which have been used in the sensitization training of the Philippine Judicial Academy, judges and court personnel; integration of gender sensitivity training, laws on women and children, and human rights in the curriculum of the Philippine Public Safety College of the DILG; enhancement of community development and empowerment of poor women and children through community-based training for women and children's rights advocates; conduct of training for the Lupong Tagapamayapa (dispute mediators) and DILG personnel on the Barangay Justice Law; fostering institutional development of law enforcement by training police officers and DOJ personnel on human rights issues, barangay justice system, and related implementation procedures; and providing a springboard for legal reform by organizing conferences such as the International Conference on Public Interest Lawyering for Human Rights and Social Justice, spearheaded by the Alternative Law Groups in March 2008, which would lead to the enactment and/ or amendment of existing laws on women and children.²⁵

The Guidelines in the Establishment of the Access to Justice Networks (AJNs) has likewise been crafted. The AJN is an interagency and multi-stakeholder mechanism at the barangay, municipal, and provincial levels that will: (1) provide information on access to justice issues, inventory of laws and procedures; (2) assist poor women and children in navigating through various law procedures (i.e., Katarungang Pambarangay law); (3) recommend policies; and (4) provide for continuing education as regards pertinent laws, as well as a venue for discussion of issues for women and children.²⁶

f. Services to Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL)

A landmark legislation for the protection of the rights of children is Republic Act 9344 or the Juvenile Justice Welfare Act (JJWA), which was signed into law in 2006. It provides for a child appropriate systems and procedures in the treatment of children at risk and CICL. It covers the different stages involving children at risk and children in conflict with the law, from prevention to rehabilitation and reintegration.

To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC) was created composed of different national government agencies such as the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), National Youth Commission (NYC), and CWC, with representation from two non-government organizations (NGOs) and chaired by the DSWD.

Interventions for children in conflict with the law (CICL) as provided in the Comprehensive Intervention Program (CIP) for CICL are administered in three levels as follows:

Primary interventions - general and developmental measures to promote social justice and equal opportunity that address the root cause of offending, thus developing potentials and sustaining strength of the child, family and community to prevent circumstances of child at risk. Interventions are focused on the community as a larger system including its members.

Secondary interventions - preventive and protective measures that assist child at risk of offending, his/her family, and community with the aim of preventing circumstances that make a child to be in conflict with the law. Focus is on the problem areas in the child, family and community that need to be resolved for the circumstance of the child to return to a healthy and functioning state.

Some of the secondary interventions given to children at risk and CICT by LGUs and NGOs are the following:

- **Drama in Education and Children's Theater (DIECT)** implemented by The Children's Laboratory which provides alternative education to child laborers and street children at risk of becoming CICT and uses games, drama and other art forms as alternative methods for instruction; recognized as a valuable supporter of the DepEd's Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program
- **Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP)** implemented by the LGUs and organized in barangays with high incidence of OSYs at risk of becoming CICT; majority of services are geared towards enhancing economic capacities of youths, building their personality and life/practical skills, upgrading leadership capacities, strengthening youth participation in the community, and helping them gain access to education; assemblies are held annually to discuss pressing issues related to youth such as drug abuse, early marriage, teenage pregnancy and adolescent health
- **Special Drug Education Center** implemented by the Pasay City and Legaspi City governments which provide: a) training on character building, enhancing leadership capacities, peer counseling, computer literacy and livelihood, i.e., food processing; b) advocacy seminars on RA 9344, Reproductive Health and positive lifestyles; c) drug awareness campaigns, symposia, and youth summits; d) involving youth volunteers in feeding programs, sports fests, live band competitions, and other community-based activities; e) establishing linkages with anti-drug abuse councils; and f) maintaining a databank of youth groups and street children
- **Information Technology Literacy Program for OSY and Youth with Disability** implemented by the Cabanatuan City government which: a)

offers literacy programs for OSYs and youths with disability to enhance their employment capacities; b) installs center facilities with proper equipment for youths with disability; c) mobilizes community volunteers as teachers; d) provides on-the-job training (OJT) for OSYs and youths with disability in private and public companies; e) holds youth "abylimpics" and mini sports fests; and f) gives counseling to beneficiaries

Tertiary interventions – remedial measures that aim to restore his/her functioning state, repair the damages created as a result of his/her offense and prevent re-offending. Interventions are heavy on the child and his/her family as his/her immediate support system. The community is helped to support the rehabilitation process of the child and the family.

- **Diversion Work for CICT** implemented by the Free Rehabilitation, Economic, Education and Legal Assistance Volunteers Association (FREELAVA), Inc. It involves the organization of Children's Justice Committees comprised of barangay officials, peer educators (mostly diverted or rehabilitated CICT) and community volunteers (mothers and concerned citizens) trained on the proper handling of CICT. This restored the self-esteem of former CICT and paved way for the paradigm shift towards rights-based administration of justice
- **Volunteer Intervention Program for Youth (VIPY)** implemented by DSWD Field Office XII and partner LGUs. This has the following features: a) mobilizes community volunteers to help social workers in treating and rehabilitating CICT, b) increases involvement of rehabilitated CICT in community projects such as environment-related projects, e.g., tree planting, etc., c) gives CICT access to self-employment assistance, skills training, leadership training, education assistance and legal service assistance, and d) allows parents to undergo Parent Effectiveness Sessions that help them develop the right attitude and necessary ability in dealing with their children.

- **TuKLaSan Center** implemented by the Education Research and Development Assistance (ERDA) Foundation. TuKLaSan stands for Tuklas (discovery), Kalinga (care), Laruan (play), Aralan (study) at Sanayan (training). It provides care, protective, rehabilitative and preventive programs for street children and children at risk of becoming CICL and facilitates the entry and re-entry of school dropouts and late enrollees to school through: a) providing temporary home life until the child is reconciled with his/her family, b) counseling for children, which focuses on values education and helping them understand their situation, d) providing vocational and skills training in a nonformal, nongraded setup, e) giving assistance to children returning to formal schooling, and e) granting school assistance such as school supplies and scholarships to students.
- **Eleven residential centers** (i.e., nine Regional Rehabilitation Centers for the Youth (RRCY), Marillac Hills and the National Training School for Boys (NTSB)) are operated and maintained by the DSWD and provides 24-hour custodial care, treatment and rehabilitation services by a team of social workers, psychologists, house parents, and vocational instructors among others. CICL with suspended sentence are rehabilitated or helped to overcome their deviant behavior and become law abiding and productive individuals. CICL are provided with therapy, counseling, group living services and special nonformal education in elementary and/or high school levels. They are also provided with vocational skills training such as welding, automotive repair, practical electronics, computer literacy program or agro-farming to enable them to gain occupational skills. The families of the residents are provided with family counseling and referral for livelihood opportunities.

To ensure effectiveness in the implementation of the law, the Guidelines in the Handling of CICL was developed for service providers such as social workers, law enforcers, public attorneys, jail wardens and prosecutors. As of December 2008,

108 PAO lawyers, 100 Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) personnel, 949 PNP personnel, 385 prosecutors and 1,274 local social welfare and development officers (LSWDOs) have been trained.

2. Labor Market Interventions

Labor market interventions are defined as measures that aim to enhance employment opportunities and protection of the rights and welfare of workers. It also pertains to compliance with labor standards, minimum wages, and health and safety at the workplace.

As regards the issue of child labor, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) chairs the **National Child Labor Committee**, which gives overall guidance to the **Philippine Plan of Action Against Child Labor** (PPACL). The PPACL is implemented by multi-sectoral partners working to eliminate child labor by empowering communities and protecting, withdrawing and reintegrating rescued child workers to society.

a. Philippine Time-Bound Program (PTBP)

A program related to the PPACL is the Philippine Time-Bound Program (PTBP), which supports ILO Convention No. 182 on the prohibition and elimination of worst forms of child labor (WFCL). Major interventions implemented in this regard include: a) improving labor inspection system in order to protect working children from hazardous and exploitative work; b) development of advocacy and communication materials with core messages on eliminating the worst forms of child labor; c) strengthening and institutionalization of the Sagip Batang Manggagawa (SBM) mechanism to get children out of the worst forms of child labor; d) providing opportunities for education and vocational training for child workers through both the formal and nonformal education systems and alternative learning systems; and e) providing access to alternative livelihood and employment opportunities for parents and siblings of child laborers.

The Program focused on six priority sectors, namely: a) children in deep-sea fishing, b) commercial sexual exploitation, c) domestic work, d) pyrotechniques, e) mining/quarrying, and f) children in sugar plantations in eight areas where cases of WFCL have been documented, i.e., Camarines Norte, Bulacan, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Davao, and three cities in Metro Manila.

From 2001-2006, the PTBP has successfully prevented and withdrawn 40,549 children from commercial sexual exploitation, mining and quarrying, domestic employment, and other forms of child labor. These rescued children have been provided with nonformal education, vocational training, psychosocial counseling, legal assistance, and health services.

b. Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEA-K) Program

In order to provide livelihood for families, the DSWD also has the Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEA-K) program. The SEA-K is a capability program undertaken by DSWD with LGUs, which aims to enhance the socioeconomic skills of poor families through the organization of community-based associations for entrepreneurial development. In 2008, the SEA-K benefited 28,518 families with PhP142.8 million worth of capital seed fund. This brings the aggregate number of beneficiaries to 344,623 families and of the capital seed fund to PhP1.5 billion since the project began in 1993.²⁷ This indirectly benefits about 1,033,869 children, assuming that an average household consists of two adults and has a size of five. Also in 2008, five regions reported a total of 102 youth members of SEA-K. This, however, does not yet include other regions that were unable to give disaggregated data on the number of SEA-K youth beneficiaries in their respective areas.

3. Social Insurance

Social insurance pertains to programs that seek to mitigate income risks by pooling resources and spreading risks across time and classes. These

are designed in such a way that beneficiaries pay a premium over a given period of time to cover or protect them from loss of income and unemployment as a result of illness, injury, disability, retrenchment, harvest failure, maternity, old age, etc. This component includes micro- and area-based schemes to address vulnerability at the community level (such as micro-insurance, agricultural insurance and social support funds).

An example of social insurance programs that benefit children is the PhilHealth's Indigent Program (PHIP). The PHIP is an insurance plan for the poor, which covers care in public rural health units and hospitals. The premium is subsidized by local governments. As of March 2009, this program has already benefited about 3.4 million indigent families, or 17 million beneficiaries.²⁸

4. Social Safety Nets

Social safety nets are stopgap mechanisms or urgent responses that address effects of economic shocks, disasters and calamities on specific vulnerable groups. These are measures that target affected groups with the specific objective of providing relief and transition. Measures include emergency assistance, price subsidies, food programs, employment programs, retraining programs, and emergency loans.

a. Food for School Program (FSP)

This program is part of the Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Plan (AHMP) of the government and is implemented in priority areas identified by the National Nutrition Council (NNC) as having high hunger and poverty incidence statistics²⁹ as follows: 1) DILG-identified "hot spots" in NCR, 2) all municipalities and cities of top 10 food poorest provinces, 3) all 5th and 6th class municipalities of the next top 44 food-poor provinces, 4) all 4th class municipalities in the next top 44 food-poor provinces where there are no 5th and 6th class municipalities, and 5) municipalities with high levels of poverty based on the 2003 Small Area Estimates (SAE). Beneficiaries of the FSP are families of pupils enrolled in public elementary

schools, DepEd-supervised preschools and day care centers in the identified priority areas.

The FSP aims to address hunger among families through their children in Grades 1 to 6, DepEd-supervised preschools and DSWD day care centers. It provides a food subsidy per child/student who receive a daily ration of one kilo of iron-fortified rice per actual attendance.³⁰ For the first quarter of 2009, a total of 404,572 children from 11,733 day care centers in 433 municipalities and cities received 15,926,351 kilos of rice amounting to Php 318.52 million.³¹ From 2005 to early 2008, over 6.7 million preschoolers and Grade 1 pupils benefited from the program, which distributed a total of over 268 million kilos of rice amounting to Php 5.3 million.³²

b. Healthy Start Program

The Healthy Start Program provides supplemental food to day care children aged three to five years old. For CY 2009, food supplementation was in a form of hot meals served either during breakfast or before the afternoon session five days a week. Parents of children beneficiaries manage the feeding program based on a prepared cycle of menu using available indigenous food materials. The children are weighed and measured in height at the start of the feeding and a monthly weight and height measurement is conducted thereafter to determine improvement in their nutritional status. As of June 2009, there are 146,811 children beneficiaries of the program in 240 cities and municipalities.

c. Tindahan Natin (TN)

Tindahan Natin aims to ensure that poor families get access to low-priced basic food items particularly rice and noodles, ensure availability and supply of rice in the community, and create livelihood and job opportunities for the community. This is also part of the hunger mitigation program of the government. Target beneficiaries of the TN project are: 1) the marginalized and poor sector as direct beneficiaries of the project, and 2) the TN Operators (TNOs) as livelihood participants for their additional income.

Areas of implementation include Metro Manila and the 54 food-poor provinces identified by the NNC with high hunger and poverty incidence statistics.³³ As of June 2009, a total of 16,063 TNOs³⁴ operated serving a total of 5.6 million families.

In order to ensure that only poor households can have access to TNOs, Family Access Cards (FACs) are given to families who belong to the food threshold sector. This scheme aims to cushion the impact of the rising cost of rice on these families by allowing them to buy the NFA-subsidized rice. Identification of the target family-beneficiaries is through the General Intake Sheet (GIS) administered by the LGUs and validated by the DSWD.³⁵ For 2008, the DSWD issued 274,825 FACs to qualified beneficiaries in Metro Manila. Outside of Metro Manila, the TNOs use the Rice Allocation Ledger as reference where all eligible beneficiaries are listed.

d. Emergency/rehabilitative/restoration assistance during calamities/disasters

The Cluster Approach was adopted by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) as a mechanism to address gaps and strengthen humanitarian response to emergencies, ensure predictability and accountability of international and national responses, clarify division of labor among organizations, and define the roles and responsibilities within the different sectors responding to emergencies. It also aims to strengthen partnerships between government, UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (UN-IASC), international humanitarian agencies, and international and local non-government organizations. It seeks to optimize support to government by complementing efforts at the national and local levels in responding to priority needs in affected areas. Table 4 shows the cluster lead, composition and IASC counterpart for each sector.

Besides the provision of food and non-food items, direct services to children such as psychosocial interventions are also being offered including critical stress incidence debriefing (e.g., play therapy), supplemental feeding, supervised

Cluster	Government Lead	IASC Country Team Counterpart	Cluster Composition
Food and Non-Food Items	DSWD	World Food Programme (WFP)	DND, DA, DOH, DepEd, DILG, NFA, NNC, IOM, PNRC, FAO, CNDR, World Vision, ADRA, OXFAM
Camp Management, Emergency Shelter and Protection	DSWD	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	DILG, NCWDP, PNRC, PBSP, NHA, UNICEF, OXFAM, ABS-CBN Sagip Kapamilya, GMA Kapuso Foundation, World Vision, Plan International, Save the Children, CNDR, Children Int'l, ADRA
Permanent Shelter and Livelihood	DSWD	UN Development Programme (UNDP)-[Shelter], International Labor Organization (ILO)-[Livelihood]	NHA, DA, DND, PNRC, Phil. Relief & Dev't Service (PhilRADS), Christian Aid, Community Organizers of the Phils. (COPE), Pampanga Disaster Network, IOM, ADRA, UNICEF, World Vision
Health, WASH, Nutrition and Psychosocial Services	DOH		
Education	DepEd		
Agriculture	Department of Agriculture (DA)		
Emergency Telecommunications & Logistics	Office of Civil Defense (OCD), NDCC-Operations Center (NDCC-OpCen)		
Early Recovery	OCD		

neighborhood play, and educational assistance. Moreover, within two to three days after the event of disaster, tent or bunk houses are constructed to accommodate victims of disasters from school buildings converted into evacuation centers and to resume the conduct of classes at the soonest possible time.

5. Other Regional Multilateral/Bilateral Initiatives

Aside from social protection initiatives at the local level, the Philippines also actively engages in regional efforts to uphold children's rights. At the level of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, the Philippines initiated the formulation of the ASEAN Guidelines for the Protection of Trafficked Children, which was adopted by the ten ASEAN Member States during the Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) in 2007. The Philippines' Child Wise Tourism Program also provided

groundwork for cross-country initiatives at the ASEAN level such as the ASEAN Education Campaign, ASEAN Travelers Code, and the Annual Regional Task Force Meeting.³⁶

Another milestone for promoting child rights in 2008 was the approval of the ASEAN Children's Forum by the ASEAN Senior Officials' Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD). The ASEAN Children's Forum aims to institutionalize the participation of children in ASEAN structures. It is an offshoot of the First Southeast Asian Children's Conference hosted by the Philippines' Council for the Welfare of Children in 2006 with the support of UNICEF.³⁷ Currently, a working group for the ten ASEAN member states is in the process of formulating the terms of reference for the establishment of an ASEAN Commission on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children.

With regard to trafficking of children, the DSWD, DOLE and three NGOs, with the support of

ILO, implemented the Economic and Social Empowerment for Returned Victims of Trafficking. This program aims to foster the reintegration of trafficked victims, including children, and the systematic tracking of cases and follow-up to prevent re-victimization. Also, the Philippines entered into extradition treaties on this matter with transit and destination countries for trafficked children such as Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, USA, Thailand, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Through the DSWD's International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals (ISWSFN), Social Welfare Attachés have been deployed to countries like Malaysia, and by end 2009 to Jordan and Saudi Arabia where there is a large concentration of OFWs. Core Social Welfare Services delivered by ISWSFN include the provision of psychosocial interventions to victims of exploitation and abuse such as counseling, critical incidence stress debriefing, assistance to individuals in crisis situations, referral, repatriation assistance, and social integration services.

A notable accomplishment of the ISWSFN in 2008 was the provision of assistance to deportees including 257 stateless children deportees aged 0-7 years old. Deportees included undocumented Filipino nationals who were victims of trafficking and illegal recruitment; victims of forced labor; and distressed OFWs. Services provided include counseling, critical incidence stress debriefing, securing of travel documents for immediate repatriation, networking/ referrals, and facilitating court hearings of rescued trafficked victims. Social workers were also posted in the International Social Services Japan (ISSJ), an international NGO. In 2008, the ISSJ served 68 cases of Filipino nationals, mostly involving children. The cases included adoption, repatriation, financial support, and child custody.³⁸

Moreover, the country also actively supports global efforts to uphold child rights, such as the UNICEF's Project on Protective Services for Children Affected by Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking, which is a key program to address commercial sexual exploitation; and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Trafficking Watch Group.

Since trafficking interventions are incomplete without addressing the gender perspective, the Gender Mainstreaming Program of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is also currently being implemented by concerned government agencies and NGOs.

6. Support Mechanisms for Children

a. Child-Friendly Movement

The Presidential Award for Child-Friendly Municipalities and Cities gives recognition to the Local Government Units and their Local Chief Executives that put in place a "child-friendly" environment and uphold the rights of children to survival, protection, development, and participation. There are five categories for the Presidential Award, namely, for 4th to 6th Class Municipality, for 1st to 3rd Class Municipality, for Component City, for Independent Chartered City, and for Highly Urbanized City. Its major components include Planning and Policy Formulation (15%), Resource Utilization (15%), Service Delivery (40%), Institution Building (10%), Child Participation (10%), and Community Participation (10%). Service delivery which has the biggest percentage consists of the indicators on health, education, and special protection.

b. Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC)

The Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) is a council organized at the provincial, city, municipal or barangay level that is responsible in planning and spearheading programs for children. The LCPC is an enabling mechanism for formulating policies, plans and programs for children and assisting LGUs make the locality child-sensitive or child-friendly. LCPCs provide the coordinative linkages with agencies and institutions in planning and monitoring and evaluation of plans for children at the local level (provincial, city/municipal and barangay).

Efforts to establish LCPCs continue, with 72.6 percent (53) of the 73 provinces assessed, 72 percent (81) of the 119 cities assessed, 48 percent

(618) of the 1,397 municipalities assessed and 33 percent (11,059) of the 38,898 barangays assessed having functional LCPCs as of December 2008.³⁹

*c. National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)-
Basic Sectors on Children and Youth*

Through Republic Act 8425 or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act, the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) serves as the oversight and coordinating body of all poverty reduction programs of government and institutionalized Basic Sector participation in governance at all levels of decision-making and management processes.

The government sector and the civil society/ basic sectors are two major pillars of the NAPC. Heads of national government agencies (NGAs) and the four leagues of LGUs compose the government sector component, while the basic sector component has the Sectoral Representatives of the fourteen basic sectors which include the children and youth and student sectors.

*d. Inter-Agency Committee Against
Trafficking (IACAT)*

Republic Act No. 9208, otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, provides for the creation of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the law. The DOJ is chair of the committee, while the DSWD sits as co-chair. Its members are: the secretaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); heads of the Bureau of Immigration (BI), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine National Police (PNP), Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), and National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW); and sectoral representatives of the children's sector, women's sector, and OFW sector. Ex officio members are the secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government and head of the Philippine Center for Transnational Crime.

The IACAT implements projects geared towards the elimination of trafficking in persons in the Philippines, prevention of the occurrence of trafficking, protection and rehabilitation of victims, and conviction of trafficking offenders. Among its accomplishments is the formulation of the Philippine Guidelines for the Protection of Trafficked Children, Manual on Law Enforcement and Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons Cases, and Manual on Recovery and Reintegration of Victim Survivors on Trafficking, among others. As of June 2009, a total of 17 Regional IACATs are in place in all regions and 104 local IACATs have been established in 25 provinces, 16 cities and 63 municipalities.⁴⁰

*e. Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against
Women and Children (IAC-VAWC)*

The Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children (IAC-VAWC) was created under Republic Act 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act, to spearhead efforts and initiatives for the implementation and monitoring of the law. Members include DSWD, DILG, NCRFW, Civil Service Commission (CSC), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), DepEd, Department of Health (DOH), DOJ, DOLE, CWC, NBI and PNP.

Among its endeavors is the upgrading of the PNP-Women and Children's Concerns Division (WCCD) into a Women and Child Protection Center (WCPC) to serve as a "one-stop-shop" for the investigation of victims of sexual abuse and violence against women and children. Moreover, the NCRFW issued VAW performance standards for the DSWD, DOJ and DILG as a tool for service providers to respond effectively to cases of VAW, to gauge the level of compliance to national policies, to generate concrete data needed for program development and policy formulation, and to serve as advocacy tool for protecting women's rights. Also, in 2006, Men Opposed to Violence Everywhere (MOVE), Philippines Inc. was established through the initiative of the NCRFW to tap men actively involved in the elimination of VAW.

f. Registration, Licensing and Accreditation

To ensure quality of services being provided by DSWD, LGUs and NGOs, the DSWD as part of its regulatory function registers, licenses and accredits social welfare and development agencies. For children and youth caring agencies, 37 residential and 508 community-based agencies have been registered, 266 residential and 212 community-based have been licensed, and 128 residential and 61 community-based agencies have been accredited as of 2008.⁴¹

Issues and Challenges on Social Protection

While these social welfare programs have succeeded in helping the poor, issues regarding leakage of benefits to the non-poor, exclusion of the truly poor, and cost-effectiveness of programs have been raised.

According to the studies of Reyes (2008) and Manasan and Cuenca (2008), the following key issues regarding implementation of social assistance programs need to be addressed:

A. Need for better targeting

Aside from gaps in addressing major social risks, another observed common weakness of various poverty reduction programs is the lack of a proper targeting system. Although targeting per se is not a one-size-fits-all system, Reyes (2008) suggested that under-coverage and leakage rates can be reduced to acceptable levels if a proper targeting system is used.

While partnerships with NGOs and other stakeholders have succeeded in making social services accessible to the poor, Aldaba (2008) observed that there seems to be a tendency for NGOs to flock to selected advocacies (i.e., children's causes) while leaving out the other sectors (i.e., PWDs and OPs). Aldaba emphasized the need for government to provide direction to the NGOs and stakeholders by encouraging them to undertake causes that need their support the most.

Further, the Manasan and Cuenca study revealed that the leakage of the Food for School Program is 59 percent and 62 percent for the DSWD and DepEd components, respectively. In essence, the share of the poor in the total transfers was only 41 percent for the DSWD component and 38 percent for the DepEd component.⁴²

Hence, it was discovered that geographic targeting alone based on provincial-level poverty incidence and the income class of municipalities is not enough to target intended beneficiaries. The same study suggested that household targeting with the use of verified or proxy means test combined with geographic targeting can better improve its accuracy.⁴³

To address this need, the **National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction Program (NHTS-PR)** was established. Using the 4Ps Proxy Means Test as its model, the NHTS-PR was created to reduce leakage rates of pro-poor programs. It will cover 8.3 million households in the following priority areas: Phase I -1) 20 poorest provinces; 2) municipalities with a poverty incidence rate of 60 percent and above based on the 2003 Small Area Estimates (SAE); and 3) pockets of poverty in highly urbanized cities. Phase II - 1) municipalities with 50 percent to 59 percent poverty incidence, and 2) pockets of poverty in municipalities with 49 percent and below poverty incidence; Phase II - pockets of poverty in component cities nationwide. The NHTS Management Office has already been created to oversee the program.

As of August 2009, more than 1.78 million households have been enumerated. Of these, more than 1.66 million have been encoded and 865,799 of these households have been identified as poor after being subjected to the PMT.

B. Need to improve budget and cost effectiveness

While the adverse impact of social risks to society is far-reaching, the resources to fund implementation of much needed social protection programs are limited. Limited resources underscore the need for better poverty targeting;

Table 5. Overall Trends in Aggregate DSWD Spending (CY 1999-2006)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total DSWD spending (in million pesos)	1,796	2,170	1,759	1,980	2,556	2,784	3,250	3,315
% to Total NG expenditure	0.31	0.32	0.25	0.27	0.31	0.32	0.34	0.32
% to GDP	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.05
Total DSWD spending based on GAA allocation (in million pesos)	1,635	1,644	1,454	1,805	1,959	2,150	2,239	2,092
Nominal per capita (in pesos)	24	28	22	25	31	33	38	38
Real per capita (in pesos)	25	28	21	22	27	27	29	27
Nominal per poor population (in pesos)	74	86	70	79	103	107	118	114
Real per poor population (in pesos)	79	86	66	72	90	87	91	83

better resource mobilization and coordination among government agencies, LGUs, NGOs, and other stakeholders; and enhancing capacities of LGUs to deliver social protection programs.

The study of Manasan and Cuenca (2008) on government spending for social assistance or SWD services revealed the following:

- Basic social services spending accounts for an average of 14.42 percent and has been decreasing from 1999-2005.
- The share of SWD services in total national government expenditure on basic social services is relatively small (0.3% in 1999-2006 on the average).
- The share of SWD services is notably stable compared to that of the education or health/nutrition sector when measured relative to the total national government spending, national government spending as percentage to GDP, and/or when expressed in real per capita terms.

Another study by Manasan (2007), Financing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Philippines, highlighted the estimated resource gaps for achieving the MDGs for the period 2007-2015 totaling PhP 777.9 billion with breakdown

as follows: PhP 348.8 billion for education; PhP 83.6 billion for health; PhP 1.9 billion for water and sanitation, and PhP 343.6 billion for poverty reduction.⁴⁴

Several proposals were recommended by the study, such as: a) improve tax collection by strengthening systems and procedures of revenue collection agencies; b) mobilize local government units to allocate resources for the MDGs; c) sustain budget reform initiatives; d) allocate resources away from tertiary to basic education; e) allocate more resources to public health/primary health care; f) exert maximum effort to ensure that resources are utilized efficiently; g) mobilize resources from the private sector; and h) pursue a stronger population management policy and program.

If the proportion of budget allocations reflects the government's priorities, the evident decrease in government spending for SWD programs, as shown by the study of Manasan and Cuenca (2008), is indeed alarming. It reflects the need for government to re-allocate budgets for SWD and strengthen partnerships with LGUs and NGOs to augment SWD budgets.

In relation to proper utilization of the SWD budget, it is also important to note when the various modes of social assistance (i.e., cash vs. noncash and conditional vs. nonconditional) will be applied.

C. Need for effective monitoring of social protection programs and database on children

To facilitate better program delivery and transparent monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and measures being undertaken by both national and local government as well as partner agencies, there is a need to establish a database on children clients. This will prevent errors in the consolidation of data, better capture data from the field, and facilitate timely reporting of information.

At present, a database on children in need of special protection (CNSP) is being developed by DSWD which includes data on children in armed conflict (CIAC). To date, the child intake sheet which will be used to gather data from the field has been pre-tested and is being finalized. Output tables have been finalized and the variables and indicators needed for the development of the system have been approved.

Further, efforts to develop an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) web-based information system are underway. The system has been set up and training of trainors was conducted last February. Field offices of the Department have drafted their respective action plans for the rollout of the system and guidelines for the said project are being formulated.

The CWC also initiated in 2003 the Subabay Bata Monitoring System composed of macro monitoring, micro monitoring and project-based monitoring system. Monitoring of the CRC implementation and support for the Annual State of the Filipino Children Report (SFCR) are within its macro monitoring scope. It has 143 indicators for the seven clusters of child rights. Sixteen agencies are linked to

this system including major national government Agencies (NGAs) and statistical agencies such as the National Statistics Office (NSO) and the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB). Even with the installation of the system, data generation is still slow and available data is not up-to-date. Likewise, disaggregation of data by age, gender, ethnic group, rural or urban, and other pertinent categories is also wanting.⁴⁵

D. Others

Apart from the above issues and challenges already discussed, a study conducted by the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP), entitled Review and Strengthening of the National Social Protection and Welfare Program and commissioned by the National Social Welfare Cluster, identified the most fundamental problems of the government's social protection and welfare programs as follows: a) Social protection has a narrow base of beneficiaries. b) Poor and informal sectors have limited access, bargaining power and influence on local officials and service providers. c) Programs are numerous but have limited reach, uncoordinated, inadequately funded and short-lived. Hence, for example, prevalence of malnutrition remains high not for lack of programs but more for inadequate coverage and lack of effectiveness.⁴⁶

These findings are supported by the Social Protection Index (SPI)⁴⁷ of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which show that the Philippines lags behind other neighboring countries in terms of social protection coverage especially for children, gauged in terms of percentage of target population as follows: Philippines – 5.0 percent; Malaysia – 99 percent; Indonesia – 98.9 percent; and Vietnam – 62.4 percent.

Future Scenarios: Implications and Consequences

All of the prospective conditions previously depicted in Megatrends 1 now stand true, and unless collective action is mobilized to successfully tackle the root causes of the issues and trends defined, it will continue to stand true in the coming years. These scenarios include: 1) homelessness of children due to urban migration, 2) disintegration of families due to overseas migration, 3) increasing demand for child care facilities, 4) occurrence of disabilities in children from poverty-stricken areas and those with little or no access to basic health, social and other services, 5) displacement of families in conflict areas, 6) continued vulnerability of children during natural disasters, and 7) increasing incidence of juvenile delinquency.

Obviously, a disintegration of and/or a dysfunction in the basic institution established for the welfare of children, which is the family, will have significant effects in the fulfillment of child's rights. According to John Bradshaw, families are social systems which follow organismic laws. It is defined by the interaction and interrelationship of its parts rather than the sum of its parts. When such system is out of balance, the rest of the members of the system will try to bring it back to balance.⁴⁸

Failure to address poverty effectively and its underlying causes such as high population growth rate would simply mean exposing our families and children to risks and vulnerabilities such as unemployment/underemployment, illnesses, disability, loss of income, low level of education, etc.

This translates into a more burdened way of living for millions of families and their children who are already trapped in this cycle and who may resort to any means just to make ends meet or simply to forget their pain and their needs through deviant behavior such as substance abuse or other forms of addiction. Families that face tremendous vulnerability to poverty will tend to depend much

on the contribution of children to the welfare of the family, thus employing children even at a young age to assist the family financially. This poses more risks and possible exploitation of children such as prostitution, trafficking and cyberpornography. Other than that, it can also negate the fulfillment of other rights such as rest, leisure and education. It must be noted that though poverty may contribute to the formation of CICL, wherein the commission of an offense or violation is part of carrying out one's livelihood or an act of survival, studies show that the parent-child interactions and relationships still contribute largely (70% of the variability) to the occurrence of delinquency.⁴⁹

Migration has always been a more acceptable way of addressing the economic needs of the family. This will continue to be a trend if domestic job opportunities being offered are not sufficient to address the needs of the family. The accompanying social costs of such endeavor may not be definitive yet. However, it is certain that those children left behind would have to deal with the loss of at least the physical presence of one or both of their parents, which is already a considerable loss for them.

Therefore, it should be seen that there are three major influences that should be reckoned with in shaping the future of children. First are the quality, security and stability of families together the dynamics of where these children are born into, given roots, molded and set free to contribute to society. Second is the abject poverty that subjects these families to risks and vulnerabilities that leave them in sub-human conditions and hence hinder the full enjoyment of the rights of individual members—most vulnerable of whom are the children. Third, the value system of individuals and collectively of society must be pondered upon and addressed, i.e., whether the values embraced and instilled by institutions such as media, school, churches and families themselves contribute to or hinder the attainment of a better future for children.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Poverty alleviation has been a flagship program of government. However, this should be viewed not just in terms of macroeconomic growth but largely by how much an individual is able to find opportunities for his/her advancement and reach his/her potential, fulfill his/her dreams and be able to contribute to society. In this regard, much reform still needs to be done in establishing a better welfare system for our citizens and in ensuring equitable distribution of wealth. This also means better social protection services for all especially the most vulnerable and marginalized in order for them to not simply survive but live a life with dignity.

Securing the lives of our children by safeguarding their environment and their families through poverty reduction and risk mitigation will provide a better future for our citizens, where their rights to survival, protection, development and participation are not compromised in any way, their dignity intact and their potential realized by contributing to the improvement of society.

Viewed in the context of social protection, we can see that the country has made significant inroads in upholding children's rights and in developing policies and programs for children. However, a lot still needs to be done in promoting, protecting and fulfilling children's rights. This job cannot be done by government alone. Though government has a responsibility to facilitate the realization of child's rights, other institutions particularly those outside and crucial to the family, i.e., schools, church, civil society, and the private sector, should also do their share in social responsibility. The main objectives of social protection are: 1) reduction of poverty, 2) protection of the poor and the vulnerable from risks, and 3) mitigation of pressures on households. The strategies delivered through its components, when effectively delivered, should meet these objectives and lessen susceptibility to risks.

Prioritizing children's welfare in the legislative and development agenda must be sustained and the following actions provide a way to move forward:

- a. Adopt a rights- and gender-based approach in policy formulation, program planning and development, and monitoring and evaluation of social protection programs.
- b. Scale up the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)* as the core social protection program of government that invests in human capital to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Ensure convergence of other social support services being delivered to household beneficiaries. Ensuring synchronicity of programs and projects addresses non-duplication, high impact on target beneficiaries and better allocation of the limited resources of government.
- c. Use the *National Housing Targeting System* database as reference in determining priority beneficiaries of all social protection programs being implemented by the national government to ensure focused targeting of vulnerable households.
- d. Initiate and pursue more strategic lobbying with lawmakers and interest groups to facilitate the passage of bills on anti-child pornography; decriminalization of prostitution; age of sexual consent; and anti-corporal punishment;
- e. Promote and ensure the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Violence Against Children, which aims to prevent and protect all children, especially those at risk, from violence and ensure the recovery and reintegration of victims-survivors in their families and communities, as well as facilitate the rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence.⁵⁰

- f. Continue to allocate resources in order to create better and more responsive services for children.
- g. Continue to sponsor and encourage the participation of children in programs which promote and protect their rights.
- h. Sustain the network and partnership of government, NGOs, and socio-civic groups in implementing programs for children and in advocacy work.
- i. Continue to intensify our efforts to establish and maintain a functional monitoring system and database disaggregated by age, gender, and ethnicity, which will account for children needing assistance and support, as well as identify services necessary to prevent incidences of child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking.
- j. Review our existing social protection systems and mechanisms for children to ensure that these are responsive and cater to their best interest.

Investment in our children is a sure guarantee for our future. Policy directions on this matter must therefore be solid and unambiguous as to what we hope to accomplish, and programs, activities and resources of all sectors must be synergized for their realization. Transparency and accountability must be part of the culture of governance. In so doing, prioritizing the rights and welfare of our citizens especially that of children will become second nature, and monitoring and reporting will only be a way of validating the services being provided for. Needless to say, institutional strengthening and strong political will to carry out these endeavors are also needed for the fulfillment of children's rights.

Thus, it must be clearly understood that even when opportunities for growth and adequate support are provided for the achievement of promoting and protecting the rights of children, success could not be made certain and fueled without the collective will of all stakeholders involved – both as duty-bearers and as claim-holders of human rights.



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Population and the Future of Children

By Dr. Ernesto M. Pernia

The population issue – long settled in other developing countries – continues to be debated in the Philippines for two main reasons. One, of course, is the conservative position of the Catholic Church hierarchy, despite the view of the significant majority of Filipinos¹ that rapid population growth is an impediment to socioeconomic development, requiring policy intervention. Two, political leaders tend to see the issue of no immediate or near-term concern, i.e., not during their term of office, anyway. Both reasons seem clearly wrong-headed, judging from the opportunities the country has missed which, by contrast, its Asian neighbours have taken advantage of by dealing resolutely with their population problem.

The first reason – the contrarian stance of the Catholic Church hierarchy and other conservative religious groups – is addressed in other papers (e.g., UPSE, 2004; Pernia, 2009). Here, we focus on the second – namely, that population is not an immediate or short-term concern – as this has a direct bearing on the future of children. We argue that good population policy now is in fact an investment in children that will be key to their well-being and future development.

This paper first reviews the main concerns about high fertility and rapid population growth that make them a public interest issue. Next, it discusses demographic trends in relation to poverty and hunger, access to family planning services, human capital investment in children, and overseas employment and children. It then revisits the rationale for government intervention and points out the need for an unequivocal and coherent national population policy for effective implementation at the local levels. The final section summarizes and concludes.

Fertility, Population Growth, and Externalities

In discussing the population issue the concept of externality is relevant. Positive and negative externalities refer to the benefits and costs, respectively, of an activity that is not fully internalized by the one responsible for the activity. A typical example of an activity with a positive externality is infectious disease immunization, and of one with a negative externality is smoke emission. An externality represents a market failure that warrants government intervention.

The concern about rapid population growth stems from the notion that high fertility has negative externalities.² The most often cited areas of concern are economic growth, the environment, and poverty and income distribution (Birdsall, 1994).

First, rapid population growth constrains economic growth, as it limits investments in physical and human capital.³ At the household level, high fertility tends to hamper investments in children's education and health. Yet endogenous growth theory underscores the positive externalities to economic growth of investment in human capital. A developing country with an expanding proportion of school-age children and limited fiscal resources would be hard put to maintain the efficiency of its education and health spending. The declining quality of education in some developing countries, including the Philippines, exemplifies this difficulty. Put succinctly, high fertility is associated with less education and health care per child, leading to lower productivity of the labor force and, hence, the social cost of slower economic growth.

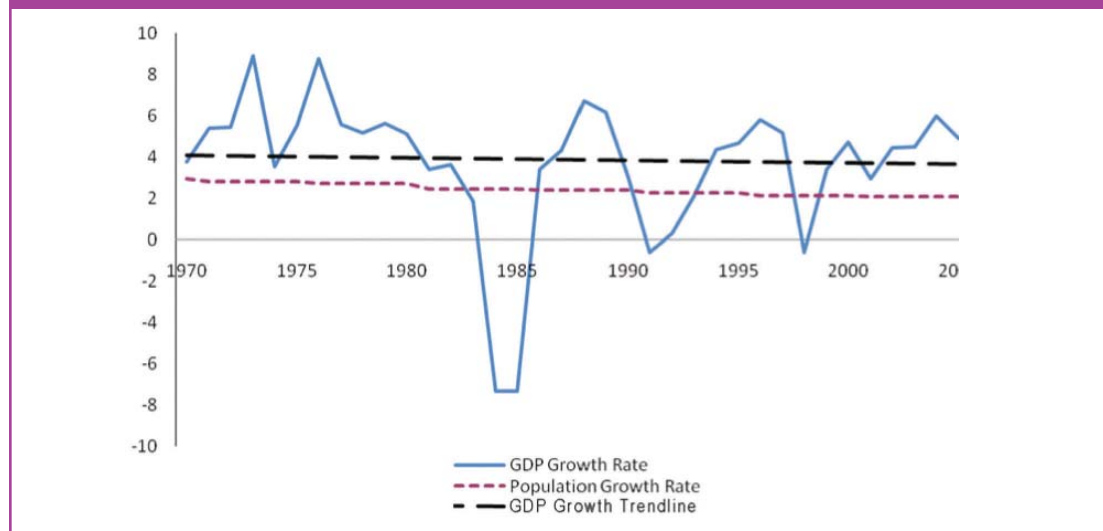
The connection between population growth and economic growth in the Philippines can be seen in Figure 1. This shows the country's: (i) annual GDP growth rate that appears in a boom-bust pattern; (ii) long-run average ("natural") GDP growth rate over the period 1970-2006 that looks virtually flat at around 4.0 percent throughout; and (iii) population growth rate over the same period that diminishes slowly from 3.0 percent to 2.1 percent. The difference between (ii) and (iii) is the long-run ("natural") GDP per capita growth rate averaging 1.45 percent over the three-and-a-half decades – which is unimpressive to say the least.

Second, rapid population growth contributes to straining the environment and natural resources, including both sources – forests and water, and sinks – the air that gets polluted (Birdsall, 1994). At the local level, high fertility and poverty often contribute to resource depletion and environmental degradation, as population pressure induces upland farming and the cutting of trees for fuel (Cruz, 1992). At the global level, while the developed countries are deemed more responsible on a per capita basis for fossil fuel emissions that lead to climate change, developing countries' further population and income growth is expected to increase their contribution to global emissions from about one-fifth in the 1990s to one-half by around 2050 (Birdsall and Dixon, 1991; Bongaarts, 1992).

Ensuring food availability at sustainable environmental and economic costs is also an issue at the global level. For instance, it is estimated that demand for cereals will increase from two billion tons in the early 1990s to 3.6 billion tons by 2030, and that as much as 90 percent of the increase will be attributable to population growth and only 10 percent to higher incomes (Cassen, 1993). The binding constraint in developing countries will likely be water, for which there is rising demand from non-agricultural uses.

A case in point is the rice crisis that came to the fore in 2008 – which is not just a supply- but also a demand-side problem. A simple counterfactual demand analysis is instructive. Both the Philippines and Thailand had a population of about 37 million in 1970 and growing at 3.0 percent. If the Philippines' population growth had slowed at the same rate as Thailand's (from 3% in 1970 to about 0.7% currently), Philippine population in 2008 would only be about 66 million, not the actual 90 million. Annual rice consumption would only have been about 13 million metric tons, instead of the actual over 18 million metric tons. As domestic production is 16 million metric tons, the Philippines could have been a net exporter rather than being the world's largest rice importer.

Figure 1. GDP and Population Growth Rates, 1970-2006 (in percent)



Third, the relation of population growth to income distribution and poverty appears relatively straightforward (Pernia and Quibria, 1999). A fast-growing population raises the supply of labor relative to land and physical capital, thereby depressing wages and leading to greater inequality and poverty. The adverse effect on labor is often worse for the less educated, unskilled workers than for the more educated ones. The inequality issue can be linked to economic and social reforms in that their success depends on the extent to which the government ensures that the costs of reform are not unduly borne by the poor and that the ensuing benefits are widely shared, as illustrated by the experience of the East Asian “miracle” countries (Birdsall, 1994). Moreover, inequality affects economic growth directly, apart from its impact via the difficulty of sustaining the reform process.

Early papers on population economics had pointed out that high fertility reflects a rational decision of poor parents, who derive value from children in terms of consumption, production, and security in old age. It had also been argued that high fertility may represent an insurance for parents against high infant and child mortality,

even in a setting where child survival probability is improving but is not widely known especially among the poor. Nevertheless, a large family size constricts the budget of the poor for their children's nutrition, health care and education, resulting in intergenerational inequality and likely perpetuation of poverty, or what is often referred to as the fertility-poverty vicious circle.

Demographic Trends

Unlike in many developing countries, population growth slowdown in the Philippines has been quite sluggish, from about 3.0 percent per annum in the early 1970s to 2.5 percent in the mid-1980s, thereafter levelling to 2.36 percent in 1990-2000.⁴ According to the most recent Census (August 2007), population growth has slowed to 2.04 percent but remains among the highest in Asia.⁵ By comparison, Thailand's and Indonesia's population growth rates, which were similar to the Philippines' in the early 1970s, have fallen sharply to 0.7% and 1.1%, respectively, in 2005-2007 (ADB, 2008). Table 1 presents population, poverty and child mortality statistics on selected Asian countries with which the Philippines is often compared.

Table 1. Population, Poverty and Child Mortality – Selected Asian Countries

	Population		Poverty and Child Mortality		
	Annual growth rate (%) 2005–2007	Fertility (%) 2006	% below official poverty line 2004	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) 2006	Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) 2006
Bangladesh	1.3	2.9	40.0 ⁵	52	69
Indonesia	1.1	2.2	16.6 ⁷	26	34
Malaysia	2.0	2.7	5.1 ²	10	12
Nepal	2.2	3.4	30.9	46	59
Pakistan	2.0	3.6	23.9	78	97
Philippines	2.04 ⁷	3.3	33.0 ⁶	24	32
Thailand	0.7	1.8	9.8 ²	7	8
Vietnam	2.0	2.2	19.5	15	17

²2002 ³2003 ⁴2004 ⁵2005 ⁶2006 ⁷2007

Source: ADB, *Basic Statistics 2008 (May 2008)*.

Correspondingly, the Philippines' total fertility rate (TFR)⁶ declined from 6.0 in 1973 to 4.1 in 1993; it was reported at 3.5 in 2003 (NDHS 2003) and estimated at 3.3 in 2006. This compares with Thailand's TFR at 1.8 and Indonesia's at 2.2, although these countries had about the same rates in the early 1970s as the Philippines. Only Nepal and Pakistan have higher TFRs, and even Bangladesh and Vietnam have lower TFRs, compared with the Philippines (Table 1). High fertility results in high youth dependency burden – also referred to as “demographic onus” – defined as the ratio of the segment of the population aged 0-14 to the portion aged 15-64. This ratio (as of 2006) is 69 percent for the Philippines compared with Thailand's 52 percent, Indonesia's 56 percent, Malaysia's 64 percent, and Nepal's 75 percent.

As early as the 1970s-1980s, an annual population growth of 2.0 percent or more then prevailing in many developing countries was considered high and more likely to impede than promote economic development (Demeny, 1971; World Bank, 1984; Pernia, 1987). A more recent cross-country study by Mapa and Balisacan (2004) shows that population growth dampens economic growth via low saving rate and capital-to-labor shallowing. By contrast, a faster relative expansion of the workforce (implying “demographic bonus” due to slower overall population growth), life expectancy at birth (a health indicator), openness to trade, and quality of public institutions (denoting good governance) all exert positive and significant effects on economic growth and poverty reduction.

Population, Poverty and Hunger

Poverty incidence in the Philippines – at 33 percent as reported in the last Family Income and Expenditure Survey (2006) – is also among the highest in developing Asia (Table 1). By comparison, Thailand's poverty incidence is down to 9.8 percent (as of 2002) and Indonesia's to 16.6 percent (as of 2007).⁷ Only Bangladesh has a higher poverty incidence, while Nepal's is even lower, than the Philippines'.

As to infant and child mortality, the Philippines' rates are better than those of the South Asian countries and similar to Indonesia's. But the Philippines has clearly fallen behind Thailand, Malaysia, and even Vietnam.

The above comparisons in demographic, poverty and child mortality indicators are instructive. The experience of Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam suggests that good population policy combined with sound economic policy, stemming from sustained policy reform, brings about rapid economic growth, poverty reduction and better child survival. Meanwhile, the experience of Indonesia, whose governance and corruption ratings have been reported until recently to be worse than those of the Philippines, suggests that good population policy by itself can contribute to significant poverty reduction (UPSE, 2004). At the same time, Bangladesh shows that, even at low levels of per capita income and literacy, serious implementation of population policy can result in sharply lower population growth and fertility rates that, in turn, can facilitate improvements in social indicators.

Simulations in the Mapa and Balisacan study (2004) illustrate that if the Philippines had followed Thailand's population growth trajectory, average income per capita could have risen by an additional 0.76 percent per annum over the period 1975-2000, or a cumulative increase of 22 percent in income per capita by 2000 – meaning a GDP per capita in 2000 of \$1,210 instead of the actual \$993 [or \$4,839 instead of \$3,971 in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms]. At the same time, there could have been basic education cost savings of P128 billion from 1991-2000, and basic health cost savings of P52 billion from 1996 to 2000.

Moreover, poverty incidence could have been 5.5 percent lower, and about 3.6 million more people could have been lifted out of poverty. And the cost savings from public education and health services could have been used to improve the quality of services, or to finance agricultural sector

investments that – along with lower population growth – could have sharply reduced rural poverty.⁸

These simulation results were based on cross-country regressions (80 developing and developed countries). A subsequent study by Mapa (2006) using data on Philippine provinces confirms the “demographic dividend” that could arise from progressively lower dependency ratio resulting from slower population growth.

Family size (or number of children) is closely associated with poverty incidence, as consistently borne out by inter-temporal household data. Data for 2000, for example, show that poverty incidence rises monotonically from 9.8 percent for family size of one to 57.3 percent for family size of 9+ (Table 2). Moreover, poverty incidence declined the slowest for family size 9+, from 59.9 percent in 1985 to 57.3 percent in 2000 compared with 19 percent to 9.8 percent, respectively, for family size 1.

Applying econometric analysis to the data, Orbeta (2005a) points out that the association between family size and poverty incidence is robust. He finds that an additional child adversely impacts family welfare and that this negative effect is regressive, i.e., the poorer the household the larger the impact.

Likewise, Reyes (2002) shows that family size is directly related to the vulnerability to poverty or the household’s likelihood of falling into poverty owing to exogenous shocks, e.g., typhoons, droughts, and consumer price increases.

At both the macro and micro levels, the connection between population growth (or fertility) and poverty is strong. That poverty is more serious among larger families than among smaller ones is further substantiated by data showing that hunger is more serious among the former than among the latter (Mangahas, 2009). The SWS September 2008 survey reports that 18.4 percent of household heads say that their families had experienced involuntary hunger (nothing to eat) at least once in the past three months, of which 15.2 percent felt occasional (moderate) hunger, and 3.2 percent suffered hunger often or always (severe hunger).

Table 3 reveals the link between hunger incidence (hunger percentages) and the number of family members. It shows that the average hunger incidence for the Philippines as a whole is almost exactly the same as the rate for families of 5-6 members. And the hunger rates appear to rise monotonically with the number of family members, especially for severe hunger.

Table 2. Poverty Incidence by Family Size

Number of Children	Poverty Incidence (%)					
	1985	1988	1991	1994	1997	2000
1	19.0	12.8	12.7	14.9	9.8	9.8
2	20.0	18.4	21.8	19.0	14.3	15.7
3	26.6	23.2	22.9	20.7	17.8	18.6
4	36.6	31.6	30.1	25.3	23.7	23.8
5	42.9	38.9	38.3	31.8	30.4	31.1
6	48.8	45.9	46.3	40.8	38.2	40.5
7	55.3	54.0	52.3	47.1	45.3	48.7
8	59.8	57.2	59.2	55.3	50.0	54.9
9 or more	59.9	59.0	60.0	56.6	52.6	57.3
National	44.2	40.2	39.9	35.5	31.8	33.7

Source: Orbeta (2004) based on NSO, Family Income and Expenditure Surveys, 1985-2000.

Family members (number)	Total hungry (%)	Moderately hungry (%)	Severely hungry (%)
Philippines	18.4	15.2	3.2
1-2	10.0	8.0	2.0
3-4	17.6	15.5	2.1
5-6	18.5	15.4	3.1
7-8	23.9	18.5	5.4
9+	25.2	17.9	7.3

Source: Mangahas (2009) based on SWS September 2008 Survey.

Mangahas (2009, p. A11) notes, “Recently (SWS release, Oct. 16, 2009) a survey for the Forum for Family Planning and Development (FFPD) shows that only 33 percent of Filipinos consider the use of condoms, IUDs and pills as equivalent to abortion, and that only 25 percent think that teaching family planning in schools would lead the youth into sexual promiscuity – which are among the main arguments of ‘pro-lifers’ (quotation marks added) against the Reproductive Health Bill. Is it fair to exacerbate the problem of hunger just to soothe the consciences of those opposed to teaching family planning in public schools and to supplying married couples with condoms, IUDs or pills in government health facilities?”

Of course, poverty and hunger are also strongly influenced by the pace of economic growth and the movement of household incomes. Hence, the ongoing economic downturn is likely to have deleterious effects on the well-being of households in terms of upticks in unemployment, poverty and hunger. If poverty incidence did rise from 30 percent in 2003 to 33 percent in 2006 despite the economy growing annually at 4.2-5.4 percent, it would be safe to assume that poverty would worsen further with the economic slowdown in 2008-2010. Persistent high fertility rates owing to a continuing lack of access to effective family planning information and services can only exacerbate the poverty and hunger problems.

Access to Family Planning Services

Lower-income households do not only have more children than richer families, they also have higher unwanted fertility, as shown in Table 4. Wanted versus actual fertility is reported to be 3.8 vs. 5.9 children for the bottom quintile, 2.6 vs. 3.5 for the middle, and 1.7 vs. 2.0 for the top quintile, such that the corresponding gaps representing unwanted fertility are 2.1, 0.9, and 0.3.⁹ As expected, the wanted-actual fertility differentials are also evident by education level and urban/rural location.

	Total Actual Fertility Rate	Total Wanted Fertility Rate	Difference
Wealth Quintile			
Lowest	5.9	3.8	2.1
Second	4.6	3.1	1.5
Middle	3.5	2.6	0.9
Fourth	2.8	2.2	0.6
Highest	2.0	1.7	0.3
Women's Education			
No education	5.3	4.1	1.2
Elementary	5.0	3.3	1.7
High school	3.5	2.5	1.0
College or higher	2.7	2.2	0.5
Urban/Rural Location			
Urban	3.0	2.2	0.8
Rural	4.3	3.0	1.3
Total	3.5	2.5	1.0

Source: National Demographic and Health Survey 2003.

These gaps reflect considerable unmet need for family planning services: 26.7 percent for the bottom quintile versus 15 percent for the middle and 12.4 percent for the top quintile (Table 5). Hence, contraceptive use or contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) (any method) is low overall at 48.9 percent and especially for the poorest quintile at 37.4 percent, while CPR (modern method) is 33.4 percent overall and only 23.8 percent for the

bottom quintile (Table 6).¹⁰ Poor households mostly depend (88.4% versus 70.1% overall) on public sources of modern family planning methods which are becoming scarcer with the termination of the USAID support in 2008.

It seems clear that lack of access to family planning services, particularly among the poor, has resulted in more children than wanted or planned and adequately provided for. Indeed, Orbeta (2005b) finds that the demand for additional children is lower among women in poorer households than those in richer households. It is not unusual, therefore, that many unwanted pregnancies result in induced and illegal abortions, estimated to be nearly half a million annually in 2000 (Juarez, Cabigon, et al., 2005).

Human Capital Investment in Children

The country's potential for economic and social progress of tomorrow lies in the quality of today's children. Rapid population growth stemming from high fertility resulting in a fast-growing population of children has clear implications for the quantity and quality of public services available to children. Accordingly, population policy and family planning programs that enable parents to achieve the number of children they desire and can adequately

provide for facilitate critical early human capital investment.

"Data from many parts of the developing world provide evidence that young children with more young siblings have poorer long-term nutritional outcomes than children who have fewer young siblings. Evidence from the Philippines suggests that these effects are not as strong for current (or short-term) nutritional status. Although parents allocate current household resources equitably among children, they are unable to compensate later-born children for the cumulative disadvantage they suffer from having to share household resources (not only financial, but also parental time and attention) with more siblings than their earlier-born sisters and brothers. In particular, mother's time may be one of the most important constraints. In settings where extended support systems are weak, this often leads to poorer care when young siblings are put in charge." (Lloyd, 1994, p. 184)

Lloyd (1994) continues, "Parental investments in children are highly interdependent. Good health is a prerequisite for effective learning; it is also strongly linked to productivity and future work roles. For example, a study of primary-school-age children in Nepal found a close link between a child's long-term nutritional status and primary school

Table 5. Unmet Need for Family Planning Services, 2003 (%)

Unmet Need	Wealth Quintile						Poor-rich ratio
	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Highest	Total	
Total	26.7	19.6	15.0	13.4	12.4	17.3	2.2
Spacing	10.9	8.6	7.7	6.5	6.1	7.9	1.8
Limiting	15.8	11.0	7.3	6.9	6.2	9.4	2.5

Source: NSO, National Demographic and Health Survey 2003.

Table 5. Contraceptive Prevalence Rates, 2003 (%)

Unmet Need	Wealth Quintile						Poor-rich ratio
	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Highest	Total	
No Method	62.6	51.2	47.3	45.6	49.4	51.1	1.3
Any Method	37.4	48.8	52.7	54.4	50.6	48.9	0.7
Modern	23.8	33.8	35.7	37.9	35.2	33.4	0.7
Traditional	13.6	15.0	17.0	16.5	15.3	15.5	0.9

Source: NSO, National Demographic and Health Survey 2003.

enrolment. In Nicaragua, children's nutritional status was found to be strongly linked to mean years of educational attainment. The number of siblings has the potential to affect children's schooling not only directly but also indirectly through its effects on nutrition and health." (pp. 184-185)

Table 7 present indicators that reflect the outcomes of early human capital investment by the state (public services) and households (private resources) in selected Asian countries. In this cross section of low-fertility, high-income and high-fertility, low-income Asian countries, the Philippines comes out with a middling performance in children's health and education outcomes. For instance, while the country has a relatively high net enrolment rate of 93 percent in primary school, only 75 percent of grade one pupils complete primary education. Such completion rate is the lowest among the high net enrolment rate Asian countries.

Regarding nutrition and health, the proportion of underweight children below five years of age at 25 percent is better than that of Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan but way above Malaysia's and Thailand's rates. Among pre-adolescents (11-12 years of age), 28 percent are considered underweight, while for teens (13-19 years of age) the rate is 18 percent (FNRI, 2007).

Overall, the data are quite disturbing, considering that the Philippines had a distinct lead in education and health indicators among Asian developing countries from the early post-war years through the 1960s and 1970s. It cannot be a mere coincidence that it is the only middle-income developing country in Asia that has not managed to reduce fertility and population growth rates significantly, as discussed above.

National government spending per capita on social services declined in real terms from P2,487 in 1997 to P1,999 in 2004 (Manasan, 2004). For education the decline was from P1,789 to P1,415, and for health from P266 to P141 over the same period. More specifically for education, annual real spending per student in public elementary and secondary schools dropped from P8,439 to P6,554.

The downward trend in human capital investment appears consistent with the increase in family size, suggesting that a brighter future is unlikely to await the poor with many children. Average spending on education per student falls from P5,558 for family size 1 to P682 for family size 9+, and average health spending per capita drops from P1,700 to P150 over that same family size range (Table 8). Clearly, deficient early investment in human capital has serious implications for the future of children.

	Underweight children below age 5 % 2005	% of 1 year-olds immunized against measles % 2006	Net enrollment ratio in primary school % 2005	% of grade 1 pupil complete primary school 2004	Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds % 2000–2004
Bangladesh	48 ³	81	88.9 ³	65.1 ²	63.6
Indonesia	28 ²	72	94.5	89.5	98.7
Malaysia	8	90	99.2 ³	98.4 ⁴	97.2
Nepal	39 ⁵	85	79.2 ³	78.5 ⁴	70.1
Pakistan	38 ¹	80	67.2	69.7	65.1 ⁴
Philippines	25	92	92.9	74.9	95.1
Thailand	9	96	94.2 ⁵	n.a.	98.0
Vietnam	25	93	86.6	86.5 ¹	93.9*

¹ 2002 ² 2003 ³ 2004 ⁴ 2005 ⁵ 2006 * Estimate

Source: ADB, *Basic Statistics 2008* (May 2008).

Table 8. Mean Education and Health Expenditures by Family Size, 2002

Family Size	Mean Education Expenditure per Student	Mean Education Expenditure per Sick Member	Mean Education Expenditure per Sick Member
2	3,135	1,969	922
3	2,243	2,124	802
4	1,787	1,464	438
5	1,558	1,454	336
6	1,090	1,311	299
7	858	940	206
8	1,081	744	166
9 or more	682	756	150
Total	1,369	1,400	466

Source: Orbeta (2004) based on Family Income and Expenditure Surveys, 1985-2000.

Moreover, the prevalence of child labor is higher and school attendance lower, as the number of children in the family increases (Raymundo, 2004). Further, the odds of a child becoming underweight and stunted are greater if he/she belongs to a household with five or more members (FNRI, 1998). Thus, poverty tends to be transmitted and perpetuated from one generation to the next.

As regards the Millennium Development Goal of Education for All by 2015, the National Statistical Coordination Board admitted in July 2008 that the Philippines is highly unlikely to reach the target owing to a consistent drop in primary school participation rate from 2002-03 to 2006-07. Children in households belonging to the poorest quintile obtain five years less schooling on the average than the children of families in the top income quintile. Of the projected 29 million children in developing countries who would still be out of school by 2015, more than 900,000 will be Filipinos (UNESCO, 2008).

A further worrisome development is the reversal of gender disparity in education, with the enrolment rate of boys falling behind that of girls. The UNESCO report notes that the under-enrolment of school-age boys is true in both primary and secondary education and is even worse at the tertiary level. It is observed that the gender disparity is associated with poverty, presumably exacerbated by the number of children. This has adverse implications

for the future productivity and earnings of male-headed households.

Overseas Labor Migration and Children

It is argued that the Philippines appears to have been cut out as a labor exporter owing mainly to twin policy failures that are by now stylized facts (Pernia, 2008). On the one hand, unlike the other East and Southeast Asian economies, the Philippines failed to graduate in a timely manner from its postwar import-substitution industrialization policy toward export promotion and economic liberalization. On the other hand, while it was among the first in Asia to adopt a national population policy and family planning program in 1969, it failed to sustain the policy such that its annual population growth remains above two percent. As shown in Figure 1 above, the outcome of these policy mistakes has been a mediocre trend GDP per capita growth rate of less than 1.5 percent from 1970 to 2006. In turn, high unemployment and poverty rates and, in general, diminishing living standards have pushed workers to seek overseas employment.

While the economic benefits and costs of labor migration are relatively well appreciated, this does not seem to be true of the psychosocial costs to migrants and their families (Pernia, 2008). One early study by Fasick (1967) finds that the children of migratory agricultural workers in the United

States suffer from severe educational retardation, as they have to substitute for the work of their absent parents. Similarly, McKenzie (2006), on the basis of Mexican data, points out some unfavorable effects of migration, such as on child care (less breastfeeding and uncompleted schedule of vaccines). In addition, parental absence due to migration tends to have an adverse effect on the schooling of children, particularly of the more highly educated parents. Further, Aguilera-Guzman et al. (2004) observe that children of migrants in Mexico are more susceptible to such problems as drug abuse and absenteeism or dropping out of school.

Crawford-Brown (1999) describes children in the Caribbean waiting for their parents' return or to follow their parents abroad as "barrel children" because they are compensated with barrels of goods and money sent by their parents. These children, observes Crawford-Brown and later also Crawford-Brown and Rattray (2002), are likely to suffer from such emotional and psychological problems as depression, withdrawal, and running-away behavior due to the lack of parental contact and supervision.

Smith, Lalonde and Johnson (2004) find that serial migration can potentially disrupt parent-child bonding, adversely affecting the child's self-esteem and behavior. Moreover, they observe that time apparently does not heal the parent-child rift once it has occurred. Further, Suarez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie (2002) argue that parental attempts at long-distance relationships (e.g., via the telephone) fall short of the objective and only result in parental guilt and depression.

The separation of parents due to migration also often results in family breakdown (Scalabrini Migration Center, 2005). Apart from the psychosocial disadvantages that befall the children, OFWs themselves have to bear various psychosocial costs in their workplaces. With the feminization of migration, female overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in particular in various parts of the world are subjected to violence and abuses (Estopace, 2002). Women hired as domestic helpers and entertainers are especially exposed to

serious hazards to health and life, including sexual harassment and exploitation, rape, and sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS (Asis et al., 2005).

People's Views on the Population Issue

Pulse Asia surveys (March 2007 and October 2008) reveal that adult Filipinos' views on the population issue and attitudes towards family planning (FP) have not changed much since earlier surveys.

Nearly all Filipinos nationwide and across the broad regions and socioeconomic classes affirm the importance of the ability to plan the family, not only for the family's own welfare but also for the country's (Table 9). Moreover, more than eight of 10 people consider it the government's duty not only to educate couples on FP but also to provide services and materials for modern contraception, both "natural" (such as lactation amenorrhea and basal body temperature) and "artificial" methods (such as pills, IUDs, condoms, ligation and vasectomy). Further, close to eight of 10 Filipinos say it is important for political candidates to include family planning in their program, and three of four favor candidates who support a government budget for family planning.

A related recent SWS survey, commissioned by FFPD referred to above, focused on people's views with respect to the Reproductive Health, Responsible Parenthood and Population Development bill (House Bill No. 5043, or RH bill for short) still pending in Congress. The survey had several breakdowns, such as regional (NCR, rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, as above) socioeconomic classes, gender, marital status, and religion (Catholic and non-Catholic, including degree of religiosity). On the whole, the results lend further firm support to earlier findings.

Because the RH bill has been vehemently opposed by the Catholic Church hierarchy and other conservative religious groups, the survey findings by religion are particularly instructive (Pernia, 2009). Here, we focus on a specific provision in the RH bill that reproductive health education be

included in the school curriculum. This provision addresses the increasing problem of teenage pregnancies that result in school drop-out and, hence, a potentially gloomy future of the youth.

The question asked in the survey was whether inclusion of family planning (or reproductive health) in the school curriculum would make the youth sexually promiscuous (Table 10). The majority (54%) of Filipinos disagree. This majority view is true of Catholics (55%) even more so than non-Catholics (50%), regardless of the Catholics' degree of religiosity and trust in their church.¹¹

Rationale for Population Policy

Market failure provides the rationale for government intervention on the population issue. Apart from the notion of externality which was

lengthily discussed above, imperfect information is another source of market failure. Moreover, people's views about the population issue and the close link between high fertility and poverty provide further justification for population policy.

Information about and access to family planning services are inadequate. Low-income or less educated couples are often ill-informed about the health risks to both mothers and children of many and closely-spaced births. And even those who are sufficiently informed about the advantages of family planning may not know how to apply such information into practice or simply cannot afford, or do not have access to, suitable services. Information should enable couples to choose the family planning methods best suited to their health and religious beliefs.

Table 9. Survey Results on Family Planning, 2008 & 2007

Views/Attitudes of Filipinos	Location				
	National	NCR	Rest of Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
% who think the ability to plan the family for its welfare is important*	93	98	94	89	92
% who think such planning is important for country's welfare*	90	92	92	84	89
% who think it is government's duty to provide knowledge, services and materials for modern FP methods, both "natural" and "artificial"*	82	86	80	78	84
% who say it is important for candidate to include FP in his/her program of action**	76	74	71	72	69
% who say they support candidates in favor of a government budget for FP**	75	74	79	67	73

Source: Pulse Asia, Ulat ng Bayan Surveys, *October 2008 and **March 2007.

Table 10: If Family Planning Would be Included in School Curriculum, Youth Would be Sexually Promiscuous (numbers are percentages)

Opinion	RP	Catholics			Non-Catholics			Trust in Catholic Church		
		All	>Weekly	<Weekly	All	>Weekly	<Weekly	Much	Undecided	Little
Agree	25	24	27	22	31	29	32	25	28	24
Undecided	19	20	19	20	19	20	17	19	28	16
Disagree	54	55	53	57	50	50	49	55	44	60

Note: >weekly = church-goer at least once weekly; <weekly = church-goer less than once weekly.

Source: SWS Survey, September 2008.

Further, the large gap between wanted and actual fertility and the high unmet need for contraception, particularly among the poor, are cogent justification for the government to provide effective family planning services. These services should be extended free to the poor. Population policy should be made an integral part of the country's poverty reduction strategy.

The above can be summed up as a public interest argument that makes the need for an unequivocal and sound population policy seem obvious. There is, however, the deep-seated opposition to such a policy from some religious groups. The Catholic Church's official position allows natural family planning (NFP) as the only method in the exercise of responsible parenthood. However, NFP has not been a dependable and an effective method. For the many poor and less educated couples, in particular, learning and adopting NFP is too complicated and cumbersome and requires extraordinary discipline (UPSE, 2004).

A more humane stance of the Catholic Church hierarchy would tolerate the use of modern and tested methods of family planning, besides NFP, provided they do not result in abortion. "This moral position is also pro-life, in the sense of pro-quality-life. Each life brought into this world deserves to be raised in a dignified, human way that the parents are capable of, according to God's design, and not left to a 'bahala-na' attitude." (Tanseco, 2004, p. 16)

It is time that the Catholic Church hierarchy and other religious groups listened to the people and took a more tolerant and humane position on the need for a state-supported population policy backed by a responsive family planning program. This type of mutual understanding has long happened after all in other countries, including many where Catholics predominate. Such a tolerant stance on the part of the Church would be in keeping with the Second Vatican Council's teaching that the final arbiter of moral decision is one's informed and responsible conscience.

National Population Policy

The national government's current approach to leave the adoption of population policy and implementation of family planning programs to local government units (LGUs) is ill-advised and likely to fail. It represents poor governance, to begin with (UPSE, 2004).

In the first place, local government leaders typically wait for signals or directives from the national leadership as far as major policies are concerned. In other words, if national leaders are lukewarm about a major issue, why should local leaders even bother about it? What is worse, managing population growth at the local level may be incentive-incompatible with internal revenue allotments (IRA) which increase with population size, as well as with political careers that rise with larger constituencies. Indeed, there are thus far only a handful of LGU executives who take the population issue seriously.

Secondly, there are negative spillovers involved, since LGU territorial boundaries are not closed and people are geographically mobile. Thus, a town or province with successful population management, good economic performance, and adequate infrastructure and social services would find itself swamped with migrants from poorly performing towns or provinces.

Third, population policy cannot be local in scale or scope because varying fiscal resources and technical capabilities among LGUs militate against its consistent and effective implementation.

For these reasons, the national government cannot simply pass the buck on this important responsibility to LGUs. It must assume leadership in coming up with an unequivocal and coherent national population policy, backed by adequately funded family planning programs that provide accurate information and enable easy access to all methods of choice, especially for the poor. Then, it must enjoin all LGUs to carry out the programs on the ground.

Elements of an Effective Population Policy

The sources of future population growth and their respective contributions are: unwanted fertility – 16 percent; desired family size – 19 percent; and population momentum – 65 percent (Herrin and Costello, 1996). This suggests that the key objectives and instruments of an effective population policy are:

- First is to reduce unwanted fertility (or to meet unmet needs for contraception) through a strong national family planning program, i.e., one that allows a choice among both traditional (“natural”) and modern (“artificial”) methods of contraception. Family planning services, comprising information and contraceptive methods, should be made readily available – free or at low cost – to low-income couples who want such services.
- Second, raising the quality of basic education, reducing infant mortality, fostering women’s empowerment, and increasing employment opportunities for women are desirable goals in themselves. The side effects of these improvements would include a desire for smaller families, thereby reinforcing the downward trend in fertility and resulting in a virtuous circle.
- Third, women’s empowerment and job opportunities are also likely to result in later childbearing and wider birth spacing that slow population momentum. Slowing population momentum, like the first and second objectives, also requires fully responsive and effective family planning programs¹².

These measures are mutually reinforcing and, if backed by appropriate policy reforms in the economic and other social sectors, would bring about the best results. In this regard, the Reproductive Health (RH) bill still pending in Congress, if passed into law, would become a principal instrument of national population policy (UPSE, 2008).¹³

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

While bad governance and corruption explain a good deal of the Philippines’ slow economic growth, worsening inequality and persistent poverty, high fertility resulting in rapid population growth has been an important contributory factor. Having more children than desired in poor households is attributable to lack of information about and access to modern and effective methods of contraception. Unwanted pregnancies lead to induced and illegal abortions. The larger desired number of children in poor households than in higher-income families could be gradually reduced by education and gainful employment of women, that raise the cost of having children and parents’ motivation to invest in children.

A good family planning program coupled with education and job opportunities for women is the effective way out of the vicious circle of high fertility and poverty. It can be a powerful instrument that facilitates investments by both parents and the government in the human capital of children, thereby enabling them to achieve their full potential and enhancing the future prospects of society at large.

The foregoing clearly suggests that a coherent population policy must be part of good governance to accelerate economic growth, lessen inequality, hasten poverty reduction, and invest strongly in the next generation. A national population policy, at the core of which is a well-funded family planning program that provides accurate information and access to all methods of contraception, is pro-poor, pro-women, pro-children, pro-people, and pro-life (UPSE, 2004). Family planning programs at the local level as well as various private sector initiatives to address the population issue are likely to become more effective under a national population policy framework.



Endnotes

- ¹ Upwards of 70 percent across the broad regions and socioeconomic classes, according to Pulse Asia and SWS surveys over the past several years, as will be elaborated below.
- ² A foremost exponent of the contrarian view was the late Julian Simon whose book (1977) focuses on the positive externalities of population growth in a very long-run perspective.
- ³ Some economists, however, argue that such negative effect should not be a concern, as parents may be fully aware of the private and social costs of children and yet would rather have more children than consume more goods or services – the notion of consumer sovereignty. Hence, even though it hampers economic growth, rapid population growth may be socially optimal (Lee, 1991).
- ⁴ It is interesting that the pace of the country's population growth deceleration corresponded to the relative waxing and waning of its population program (Orbeta and Pernia, 1999; Herrin and Pernia, 2003).
- ⁵ The likelihood of a population undercount during the 2007 Census should be noted, based on reports that enumerators had difficulty accessing depressed areas owing to the fear of residents that the census was being undertaken as part of a government plan to relocate squatters to give way to infrastructure projects. Hence, a current population growth rate of 2.1 percent rather than 2.04 percent is probably more realistic.
- ⁶ TFR is the number of births a woman would have on average at the end of her reproductive life if she were subject to the prevailing age-specific fertility rates throughout her reproductive years (15-49).
- ⁷ These are official poverty-incidence numbers from respective government statistical agencies, as reported in ADB (2007). Poverty incidence is defined as the proportion of the population below a government-set poverty line. Household poverty incidence – which has recently been the preferred indicator of the Philippine government – is, by definition, lower.
- ⁸ It should be noted that the above estimates are pure demographic effects and, hence, conservative as they do not fully capture the population-economy-poverty-reduction interaction effects.
- ⁹ “In the 2003 NDHS, women were asked a series of questions about each child born in the preceding five years and any current pregnancy, to determine whether the pregnancy was wanted then, wanted at a later time, or unwanted...The danger of rationalization is present; an unwanted conception may well have become a cherished child... Respondents are willing to report unwanted conceptions, although some postpartum rationalization probably occurs. The result is probably an underestimate of unwanted fertility.” (NSO, 2004, p. 100).
- ¹⁰ By contrast, overall CPR in Thailand and Indonesia has been around 70 percent.
- ¹¹ Note that the “undecideds” range from 16 percent to 28 percent.
- ¹² Note that birth spacing is about the only measure that President Arroyo favors; however, without an effective family planning program, even that is meaningless lip service.
- ¹³ Reinforcing the positive results of earlier surveys on population and family planning, in general, as shown, for example, in Table 10 above, the most recent (September-October 2008) SWS survey results show very strong support among Catholics and non-Catholics alike for the RH bill, including the specific provision on sexuality education in public and private upper-primary and high schools.

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Food Security of Filipino Children in the Medium Term

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Introduction

Sufficient nutritious food is essential for people to live healthy, happy and productive lives. Lack of proper nutrition especially among the young can lead to premature death, as their immune system against diseases is compromised and those who survive become stunted for life physically, mentally and psychologically. Malnourished children in time become parents themselves who, however, are not sufficiently gainfully employed to provide adequately for their children. Thus, the intergenerational cycle of food deprivation and poverty is perpetuated.

One of the fundamental rights of children stipulated in the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, otherwise known as Children 21, is the right to have enough food for a healthy and active body.

This paper attempts to describe the Filipino children's state of nutrition, the relevance of the UN Millennium Development Goals to the attainment of food security, and what we, our government, industry and the private sector, and society at large, can do to assure them of their basic human right to sufficient and nutritious food, i.e., the right to be food secure.

What is Food Security?

Food security is defined as a "situation when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life in a sustainable manner" (FAO, 2001).

Our own Congress through the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 (AFMA) described food security in its totality as "the policy objective, plan and strategy of meeting the food requirements of the present and future generations

of Filipinos in substantial quantity, ensuring the availability and affordability to all, either through local production or importation or both based on the country's existing and potential resource endowment and related production advantages, and consistent with the overall national development objectives and policies."

However, to achieve universal food security, at least three conditions need to be met. First, the food must be physically available in the country in sufficient quantities either from domestic production and/or imports. Second, making more food available is a necessary but not significant condition for food security (IFPRI, 2000a); all the households and all the individual members of the households must have access to the food. The households must have assets, livelihoods and incomes with which to produce and/or purchase the food. And third, the household members must be able to biologically utilize the food, meaning their diets are appropriately balanced. Since mothers purchase and prepare the food for the households, investing in improving education and status of women is very important. Studies have shown that 55 percent of the reduction in child malnutrition in the developing world could be attributed to the education of women (Pinstrup-Andersen, et al., 2001). And people must be free from disease. People who do not have access to potable water and are living in unsanitary conditions suffer from diarrhea and other debilitating illnesses, rendering the available food ineffective, i.e., people may not be hungry but still malnourished.

There are many nuances to the long definition of food security and the enabling conditions of food availability, accessibility and proper utilization. For our country, the bottom line is, we must produce as much as food as we sustainably can, source the rest from abroad, and create jobs and livelihoods to provide our people, particularly the poor, the means to purchase food.

Filipino Children's State of Nutrition

The human body requires energy, protein, vitamins and minerals for growth, for work, and for maintenance of body functions. The nature of food security can be defined more precisely by the degree by which the body requirements for these essential food elements are met. The more common measures have to do with energy and protein, Vitamin A, iron and iodine adequacy.

Nutrient Adequacy. The nutrient adequacy of the diet of Filipino children aged 0 to 5 years in the national nutrition surveys of 2003 (NNS) is summarized in Table 1. The corresponding figures for the entire household (i.e., adults) are likewise shown to bring home the point that even though children and adults need the same food nutrients, their percent adequacy could be different and, therefore, the needed interventions could be different.

Table 1. Mean one-day energy and nutrient adequacy of children (0-5 years) and households, 2003.		
Nutrient	% Adequacy	
	Children	Household
Energy (Kcal)	83	98
Protein (g)	103	99
Iron (g)	73	60
Calcium (g)	73	57
Vit A (mg RE)	79	91
Thiamin (mg)	123	86
Riboflavin (mg)	142	68
Niacin (mg)	164	156
Ascorbic Acid (mg)	106	75

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Filipino children on the average do not consume sufficient energy, iron, calcium, and vitamin A. However, their intakes of protein, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and ascorbic acid are adequate. The households (i.e., adults) that take in excess niacin, are marginally adequate for energy and protein, and deficient in all the rest. The consequences of lack of proper nutrition among children are captured in weight and height for age and weight for height measurements (Table 2).

Table 2. Undernutrition among children 0-5 years old, 2003 (%).

Age	Underweight for Age	Underheight for Age	Underweight for Height (Thin)
0	11.7	8.2	5
1	31.2	25.4	11.8
2	31.7	31.8	5
3	29.6	37.9	3.1
4	29.2	36.4	4
5	27.3	38.2	2.9

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Easily a quarter to a third of all Filipino children below five years are small for their age (underweight and underheight). The undernourishment increases sharply during the second year after the babies are weaned from their mothers' breasts and from milk feeding. The condition of thinness (underweight for height) is worse during the second year and abates onwards.

Anemia. Iron deficiency (anemia) is prevalent among Filipino children (Table 3). Two-thirds of infants below one year are anemic. This condition is related to the nutrition of mothers before and after pregnancy. Babies with low birth weights have lower iron stores, but they grow faster during infancy to make up for "lost" weight; consequently their iron stores are depleted by age 2-3 months. The lack of iron is further exacerbated by Helminth worm infection which could be as high as 60 percent for 0-5 year olds.

Table 3. Prevalence of anemia among children, 2003 (%).

Age (Years)	Prevalence (%)
0	65.9
1	53.0
2	34.8
3	24.8
4	18.8
5	14.0
0-5	29.1
6-12	37.4

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

But even more alarming is the rise of incidence of anemia among infants, from 49.2 percent in 1993 to 65.9 percent in 2003 (Table 4). During this period there was a marginal improvement for the 6-12 year olds (from 42.0% down to 37.4%) but anemia incidence got worse for the 1-5 year olds (25.7% to 29.1%). Thus, sadly we are losing the campaign against anemia.

Table 4. Prevalence of anemia among children, 2003 (%).

Year	0–1 Year Old	1–5 Years Old	6–12 Years Old
1993	49.2	25.7	42.0
1998	56.6	29.6	35.6
2003	65.9	29.1	37.4

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Breastfeeding. The essential nutrients Filipino children lack, particularly protein, calcium and B vitamins, are found in milk. Thus, the most direct intervention is to encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies as long as they could. Unfortunately, breastfeeding among Filipino mothers leaves much to be desired (Table 5). Right after birth (<2 months old), 20 percent of mothers, for all kinds of reasons, do not nurse their babies anymore. Only 42 percent exclusively breastfeed their children. By the sixth and seventh months, less than one percent of mothers exclusively breastfeed.

Table 5. Breastfeeding of children, 2003 (%)

Age in Months	Not Breastfeeding	Exclusively Breastfed
<2	19.6	41.7
2-3	32.3	33.4
4-5	34.2	11.5
6-7	31.7	0.6
8-9	38.4	0
10-11	40.7	0
12-15	54.5	0
16-19	62.3	0
20-23	73.8	0.3

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Beyond mother's milk, the child's daily food intake comes from milk and milk products (31%); cereals and cereals products, mostly rice (30%); meats, fish and eggs (17%); and fruits and vegetables (10%).

A large part of the nutrient deficiencies among children can be explained by the drastic reduction of consumption of milk and milk products (Table 6). The daily milk consumption of infants 6-11 months old was 726 gms equivalent of whole milk. This drops dramatically to 276 gms per day for 2-3 year olds. By the time they are five years old, the intake is down to 89 gms.

Table 6. Daily consumption of milk and milk products by age group, 2003.

Age (Months)	Milk Consumption (Whole milk, equivalent, gms)
6-11	726
12-35	276
36-71	89

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

The sources of nutrition of infants up to nine months old can be gleaned from the observed infant feeding practices (Table 7). By the time the infants are 6-9 months old, 35 percent (35%) do not receive mother's milk anymore. The rest, 62 percent, are partially breastfed but receive complementary weaning food.

Table 7. Infant Feeding Practices, 2003 (%)

Practice	< 6 Months Old	6–9 Months Old
Exclusive BF	29.7	0.3
BF + water only	12.4	2.5
BF + other milk	14.6	0.3
BF + complementary food	15.4	61.8

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Thus, the approaches to improve children's nutrition have to include first, encouraging mothers to breastfeed as long as they could; second, continuing the provision of supplemental milk

and milk products to children as long as possible; and third, educating the mothers to feed their infants with bigger amounts of sanitary nutritious complementary foods as early as possible.

Vitamin A Deficiency. No progress has been achieved in combating vitamin A deficiency (VAD) among children since 1993, in spite of the national program of twice yearly vitamin A supplementation (Table 8). In fact, it has gotten even a little worse. Those with very low serum retinol (SR < 10 ug/dl) declined marginally from 10.4 percent to 8.5 percent from 1993 to 2003 but those with SR < 20 ug/dl rose from 35.3 percent to 40.1 percent. Thus, in the aggregate the incidence of low SR increased from 45.7 percent to 48.6 percent during the 10-year period.

Table 8. Prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency among 0-5 year old children, 1993-2003(%).

Year	Year	
	1998	2003
1993	10.4	35.3
1998	8.2	38.0
2003	8.5	40.1

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

The administration of 200,000 IUs of vitamin A increased serum retinol but the impact of vitamin A supplementation could not be sustained for a full 16 weeks. Three to four months after administration of vitamin A capsules, the prevalence of VAD increased. Thus it appears that the current vitamin A supplementation schedule is inadequate to sustain the desired vitamin A status beyond 6 months of age in high risk populations.

Iodine Nutrition. The picture for iodine adequacy is much better. The latest NNS figures show significant improvement in iodine nutrition. The median urinary iodine excretion (UIE) among children 6-12 years old increased to 201 ug/L in 2003 from 71 ug/L in 1998 (Table 9). This is attributed to the salt iodization program (ASIN Law).

Table 9. Iodine status of children 6-12 years old, 1998 and 2003 (ug/L).

Urinary Iodine Excretion (UIE)	1998	2003
<50	36.8	11.4
50-99	29.6	12.4
100-149	17.3	12.7
150-199	11.9	13.2
200-249	4.5	16.2
250-299	0.9	20.8
>300	0.1	14.3
Median	71	201

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

For once we have a law which very substantially achieves its stated objective. In fact, it is so effective that nutritionists are worried we are overdoing it. The proportion of children with excessive UIE (>300 ug/L) rose from 0.1 percent to 14.3 percent. Therefore, compliance must be monitored so that iodation levels are kept within the 40 ppm recommendation.

Maternal Health and Nutrition. The nutrition of the mother is a significant determinant of birth weight and the infant's health and nutritional well-being. In 2003, 27 percent of pregnant women were nutritionally at risk of delivering low birth weight babies (Table 10). There was a little improvement between the 1998 and 2003 national surveys.

Table 10. Nutrition of pregnant women, 2003 (%).

Nutrition Status	1998	2003
Nutritionally at Risk	30.7	26.6
Not Nutritionally at Risk	69.3	73.5

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Similarly, among lactating mothers in 2003, those who were chronically energy deficient (CED) and therefore had compromised caring capacities marginally declined from 13 percent to 12 percent (Table 11). Moreover, the proportion of overweight mothers increased from 14 percent to 18 percent between the 1998 and 2003 surveys. Obesity among mothers appears to be an emerging problem.

Table 11. Nutrition of lactating mothers, 2003 (%).

Nutrition Status	1998	2003
Nutrition Status	1998	2003
Chronically Energy Deficit (CED)	13.2	11.7
Normal	73.2	70.7
Overweight	13.5	17.6

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

The severity of anemia among children is mirrored in the iron status of pregnant and lactating mothers (Table 12). About 42-44 percent of mothers are anemic, and no improvement had been achieved between 1993 and 2003.

Table 12. Prevalence of anemia among pregnant and lactating mothers, 2003 (%).

	1993	1998	2003
Pregnant	43.6	50.7	43.9
Lactating	43	45.7	42.2

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

Likewise vitamin A deficiency among pregnant and lactating mothers continues to be high and worsening (Table 13). Pregnant mothers deficient and low in vitamin A constituted 18 percent of the population in 2003, a little worse than in 1993 (16%). The proportion of lactating mothers deficient and low in vitamin A got worse from 15 percent in 1993 to 20 percent in 2003.

Summary. In summary, the average Filipino child in 2003 does not consume enough energy, iron, calcium, and vitamin A. The adequacy for protein is 103 percent, but that does not imply protein malnourishment is not a problem for many children because deficiencies are obscured by the average.

Table 13. Vitamin A deficiency among pregnant and lactating mothers, 2003 (%).

	1993	1998	2003
Pregnant			
Deficient	3	7.1	2.5
Deficient and Low	16.4	22.2	17.5
Lactating			
Deficient	5.2	3.9	4.2
Deficient and Low	15.4	16.5	20.1

Source: 6th National Nutrition Surveys.

The same is true for ascorbic acid which has an average adequacy of 106 percent.

On the other hand, the Filipino child's intake of the essential vitamins thiamin, riboflavin and niacin is adequate.

The consequences of lack of proper nutrition are captured in weight, height and thinness statistics. At age five, 27 percent of Filipino children are underweight for age, 38 percent are underheight for age, and 3 percent are considered thin.

The critical age is the first twelve months when prevalence of underweight for age and underheight for age triples. The prevalence of thinness (underweight for height) is worse among one-year-olds (12%) but diminishes afterwards.

Anemia (iron deficiency) is very prevalent among Filipino children. A whopping 66 percent of infants below one year are anemic.

We are losing the campaign against anemia. Incidence of anemia among infants got worse from 49 percent to 66 percent. Anemia among 6- to 12-year-olds marginally improved from 42 percent down to 37 percent between 1993 to 2003 but anemia incidence increased among 1- to 5-year-olds from 26 percent to 29 percent.

No progress had been achieved in combating vitamin A deficiency (VAD) among children 0-5 years old since 1993 in spite of the national program of twice yearly vitamin A supplementation. The aggregate incidence of low serum retinol in fact increased from 46 percent to 48 percent.

The serum retinol levels after vitamin A supplementation could not be sustained for a full 16 weeks. Thus, the current program of vitamin A supplementation is inadequate to attain the desired vitamin A status beyond six months of age in high risk populations.

The only bright picture is in iodine nutrition. For once we have a law that achieves its desired objective. With the implementation of the salt iodization program under the ASIN law, median urinary iodine excretion dramatically doubled from 71 ug/L in 1998 to 201 ug/L in 2003. The program had been so effective that our nutritionists are now worried we are overdoing it.

The essential nutrients Filipino children lack, particularly protein, calcium, and B vitamins, are found in milk. Thus, the most direct intervention is to encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies as long as possible. Unfortunately, breastfeeding is not that popular among Filipino mothers. By the sixth or seventh month, less than one percent of mothers exclusively breastfeed their children.

Beyond mother's milk, the child's daily food intake comes from milk and milk products (31%); cereals (mostly rice) and cereal products (30%); meats, fish and eggs (17%); and fruits and vegetables (10%).

A large part of the nutrient deficiencies among children can be explained by the drastic reduction in consumption of milk and milk products starting the second year. Thus, a carefully targeted school milk-feeding program should be part of the total approach to food security for the most vulnerable children.

Since almost all our milk is imported (>99%), the practice of importing relatively inexpensive skim milk powder and reconstituting it with the healthier home-grown coconut oil makes both economic and nutritional sense. The school milk program need not be based on fresh cow or carabao milk which is very expensive.

By the time infants are six to nine months old, 62 percent obtain supplemental nutrition from complementary food, i.e., home-prepared mashed

baby foods from rice, meat, fish, eggs and some fruits and vegetables. Mothers, therefore, should be educated and exhorted to feed their children with bigger amounts of nutritious but sanitary mashed complementary weaning foods.

The nutrition of pregnant and lactating mothers is a significant determinant of birth weight and the child's health and nutritional well-being. Twenty-seven percent of pregnant mothers are nutritionally at risk of delivering low birth-weight babies. Twelve percent are chronically energy deficient among lactating mothers. In both measures little progress was achieved between 1998 to 2003.

About 42-44 percent of mothers are anemic, and no gains were achieved between 1998 to 2003.

Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) among mothers, instead of diminishing, in fact has gotten worse. The prevalence of VAD for pregnant mothers stood at 18 percent, and for lactating mothers, at 20 percent in 2003.

Food Security and the UN Millennium Development Goals

There is perhaps no human state more bereft of decency and dignity than being incapable of feeding oneself or one's family (UNCT Philippines, 2007).

Sadly the unconscionable condition of lack of food continues to affect 923 million people in the world (FAO, 2008).

The world community during the World Food Summit in 1996 resolved to address the challenge of global hunger by setting as a goal the halving of chronically malnourished people by 2015. This ambition was subsequently enshrined in the UN Millennium Development Goals (Table 14), the first of which was to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger.

Poverty and hunger are two different social phenomena but they are invariably linked together. Undernourishment is a central manifestation

of poverty (FAO, 2002). The most food insecure people are invariably those mired in poverty. Thus, the major indicators in measuring progress towards achieving the MD Goal No. 1 of eliminating extreme poverty and hunger have to do with food security particularly among children.

Table 14. UN Millennium Development Goals.

Goal 1	Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
Goal 2	Achieve Universal Primary Education
Goal 3	Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
Goal 4	Reduce Child Mortality
Goal 5	Improve Maternal Health
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
Goal 7	Ensure Environmental Sustainability
Goal 8	Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Source: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/environs.html>

The rest of the thematic MDGs, i.e., Goals 2 to 7, nevertheless are very much related to proper nutrition and food security. They are in fact highly correlated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Many of the other MDGs are next to impossible to attain without reducing malnutrition and hunger. And conversely, achieving these MDGs will facilitate attaining the goal of eradicating hunger and poverty.

For example the participation rates in primary school (Goal No. 2) have been observed to be inversely correlated with incidence rates of subsistence and absolute poverty. One of the major causes of high children mortality (Goal No. 4) is lack of proper nutrition and consequent susceptibility to diseases.

Children are absolutely dependent upon their mothers for nourishment, early education and care. Malnourished mothers are sickly and some die prematurely during childbirth (Goal No. 5). They give birth to babies who are underweight and prone to diseases (Goal No. 4). Women, therefore, must be empowered with better education and opportunities in life (Goal No. 3) to make them more fit mothers who will rear the next generation of healthy, alert and smart children.

And finally, children need access to potable water and sanitary living conditions (Goal No. 7) to save them from diarrhea and other debilitating diseases (Goal No. 6) which render available food ineffective.

Philippine Progress Towards Attaining the MDGs

The Philippines as a responsible member of the world community subscribes to the attainment of the UN MDGs and has mainstreamed them in national economic and social planning. Following is the country's Mid-Term Progress Report (2007) on attainment of the MDGs which was prepared by NEDA and the resident United Nations Country Team (UNCT).

Table 15 tabulates the Philippine 1990 baseline, current (year closest to 2006) achievement and target for 2015 for each of the proxy measures for MDGs 1 to 7. The current rate of progress (year closest to 2006) is indicated, as well as the required rate of progress between 2006 to 2015 to attain the 2015 target. To arrive at the probability of attaining the MDG targets, the required rate of progress for the remaining period (2006 to 2015) is divided by the current achieved rate (1990 to 2006). If the ratio is < 1.5, the probability is deemed HIGH; if >2.0, LOW; and MEDIUM if in between.

Eradicating Extreme Hunger and Poverty (MD Goal 1). The MDG of most direct relevance to the food security of Filipinos including children is MDG 1. The degree of food security is captured in the proportion of families and population below subsistence threshold which is defined as those not having enough means to acquire their basic food needs. At the baseline period of 1990, 20.4 percent of Filipino families were below the subsistence threshold. By 2003, this proportion had been halved to 10.2 percent, fulfilling the MDG target much ahead of schedule

The actual proportion of individuals in the entire population below the subsistence threshold is a little higher than the proportion of families

Table 15. Philippines MDG rate of progress at the national level.

MDG Goals and Targets	Baseline	Current Level (year closest to 2006)	Target by 2015	Average Rate of Progress		Ratio of Required Rate to Current Rate b ÷ a	Probability of Attaining Target
	1990			1990—2006	2010—2015		
				Current (a)	Current (b)		
Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger							
Proportion of families below subsistence threshold (%)	20.4	10.2	10.2	-0.85	0	0	HIGH
Proportion of families below poverty threshold (%)	39.9	24.4	20.0	-1.29	-0.37	0.29	HIGH
Proportion of population below subsistence threshold (%)	24.3	13.5	12.2	-0.90	-0.11	0.13	HIGH
Proportion of population below poverty threshold (%)	45.3	30.0	22.6	-1.28	-0.61	0.48	HIGH
Prevalence of malnutrition among 0-5 year old children (%)	34.5	24.6	17.2	-0.66	-0.74	1.11	HIGH
Proportion of households with per capita intake below 100 percent dietary energy requirement (%)	69.4	56.9	34.7	-1.25	-1.85	1.48	HIGH
Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education							
Elementary participation (%)	85.1	84.4	100	-0.05	1.37	28.98	LOW
Elementary cohort survival (%)	68.6	69.9	84.7	0.09	1.48	16.54	LOW
Elementary completion rate (%)	66.5	68.0	81.0	0.11	1.30	12.26	LOW
Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women*							
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	1.0	1.0	1.0	0	0	0	HIGH
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	1.1	1.1	1.0	0	0	0	HIGH
Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education	1.3	1.2	1.0	0.01	0	0	HIGH
Goal 4. Reduce child mortality							
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	80	32	26.7	-3.0	-0.59	0.2	HIGH
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	57	24	19.0	-2.06	-0.56	0.27	HIGH

* From NSCB, 2009. All data except for Goal 3 from NEDA, 2007.

continued... Table 15. Philippines MDG rate of progress at the national level.

MDG Goals and Targets	Baseline	Current Level (year closest to 2006)	Target by 2015	Average Rate of Progress		Ratio of Required Rate to Current Rate b ÷ a	Probability of Attaining Target
	1990			1990–2006	2010–2015		
				Current (a)	Current (b)		
Goal 5. Improve maternal health							
Maternal mortality ratio, per 100,000 live births	209	162	52.2	-3.62	-12.2	3.37	LOW
Prevalence rate of couples practicing responsible parenthood (%)	40	50.6	80	0.82	3.27	4.01	LOW
Goal 6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases							
HIV prevalence	< 1%	< 1%	<1%	0	0	0	HIGH
Malaria morbidity rate (per 100,000 population)	123	59	24.0	-4.57	-5.83	1.28	HIGH
Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability							
Proportion of households with access to safe drinking water (%)	73.7	80.2	86.8	0.50	0.60	1.20	HIGH
Proportion of households with sanitary toilet facility (%)	67.6	86.2	83.8	1.33	0.22	0.17	HIGH

Source: Philippines Midterm Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (NEDA, 2007).

Probability of attaining target: Required Rate (b) ÷ Current Rate (a)
 If < 1.5 HIGH
 1.5 to 2.0 MEDIUM
 > 2.0 LOW

in a similar situation, because poorer families or households tend to have more members, i.e., more children compared with richer households. The corresponding proportion of population below subsistence was 24.3 percent in 1990, down to 13.5 percent in 2003, almost meeting the modest MDG target ahead of schedule.

The subsistence threshold and the country-defined poverty threshold are highly linked indicators. Simply put, those who do not have enough to eat are also those who are very poor. The proportions of families and individuals below the poverty threshold are about 10-20 percent higher than those below the subsistence threshold.

For the most vulnerable age group, i.e., children aged 0-5 years, a quarter (24.6%) were malnourished (underweight) as of 2006, down from 34.5 percent in 1990. The target for 2015 is 17.2 percent.

Since energy by and large is the first major limiting food constituent, food security is commonly benchmarked against the minimum dietary energy requirement which for Filipinos is modestly set at 1711 K cal per capita per day¹. The degree of insufficiency for energy in 1990 was a very high 69.4 percent. It went down to 56.9 percent in 2006, against the 2015 target of 34.7 percent.

Respectable average rates of progress were achieved for the MD Goal 1 indicators during the period 1990 to 2006. The required rates of progress for the remaining five years (2010-2015) are well within what had been achieved. The ratios of the required rates over the current are all less than 1.5 and, therefore, the probability of attaining the pronounced targets by 2015 are all rated HIGH.

Achieving Universal Primary Education (MD Goal 2). The most problematic among the MDGs as

far as the Philippines is concerned is the one that appears to be most straightforward – the participation rate in elementary education. One would assume that it is simply a matter of constructing new school buildings and hiring new teachers every year to accommodate new school entrants.

The shortfall in universal primary education is particularly bothersome for two reasons. First, elementary education for the entire population is a basic precondition for economic progress. For any country to move forward on a sustained basis, it must have a reasonably well-educated workforce. Worse, the achieved rates of progress since 1990 are close to zero. Rate of progress must be multiplied 12 to 29 times if the modest 2015 target of 81 percent were to be met. Participation, cohort survival and completion rate ought to be close to 100 percent. Thus, the likelihood that the country will attain the MDG elementary education targets is LOW.

Promoting Gender Equality and Empower Women (MD Goal 3). The Philippines can be justifiably proud of its achievements in promoting gender equality. The most significant indicators are the ratios of girls to boys (gender parity indices) in school enrollment. Even at the baseline year 1990, the gender parity indices were 1.0, 1.1 and 1.3, respectively, for elementary, secondary and tertiary education, all in favor of women. Thus, attention is being directed at some other indicators such as gender-based violence, human trafficking, and wage levels.

Reducing Child Mortality (MD Goal 4). Child under five mortality rate was 80 per 1,000 live births in 1990. This was brought down to 42 in 2003 and further down to 32 in 2006, a total decline of 60 percent. The likelihood of attaining the 2015 target of 27 per 1,000 live births is therefore HIGH.

Infant mortality, on the other hand, started at the 1990 baseline of 57 per 1,000 live births. It declined to 30 in 2003 and further down to 24 in 2006, a total decline of 58 percent. The likelihood of attaining the 2015 target of 19 per 1,000 live births is also HIGH.

However, these mortality figures are higher than comparable figures from our neighbors.

Improving Maternal Health (MD Goal 5). The Philippines keeps track of MD Goal 5 by: 1) the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (MMR), and 2) access to reproductive health services, specifically the prevalence rate of couples practicing responsible parenthood.

NEDA (2007) concedes that the maternal health indicator is disturbing. MMR was 209 deaths per 100,000 live births at the baseline, went down to 172 deaths by 2003, and then slowed down to 162 deaths in 2006. NEDA concludes further that this goal is very highly unlikely to be achieved by the Philippines.

Out of 3 million pregnancies each year, half are unplanned and one-third end in abortions. Induced abortion is the fourth leading cause of maternal deaths. Most of the poor give birth at home, and they do not have access to skilled birth attendants. Mothers must have more access to prenatal and postnatal services, and more skilled birth attendants need to be trained to significantly reduce MMR.

The target for prevalence rate of couples practicing responsible parenthood was set at 80 percent, from a low base of 40 percent in 1990. This rose modestly to 51 percent in 2006. The average rate of progress needs to be scaled up four times to achieve the 2015 target. Thus, the probability of reaching the target is LOW, unless a national consensus is forged very soon to move ahead with the needed policies and programs on fertility, family planning and population management.

Combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases (MD Goal 6). HIV/AIDS prevalence is < 1%, and the Philippine government intends to keep it that way. Malaria, the sixth leading cause of morbidity, is the more pressing health concern. Malaria morbidity declined from 123 per 100,000 population in 1990 to 59 in 2006. The country is on track for attaining the target of 24 per 100,000 population by 2015.

Ensuring Environmental Sustainability (MD Goal 7). Among the plethora of possible environmental sustainability indicators, the Philippine plan zeroed in on raising the proportion of households with access to potable water and households with sanitary toilet facility. Both have been essentially achieved in 2006. The updated Philippine medium-term plan had in fact raised the targets to 92 percent and 91 percent for safe drinking water and sanitary toilet facilities, respectively.

Megatrends and Their Resonance to Food Security of the Filipino Child in the 21st Century

A number of global developments will impact on the demand, supply and trading of the major food commodities. They have acute short-term consequences as well as long-term impact on the resilience of the world food system. They will ultimately affect physical availability of food at the country level as well as access to food by households and members of the households including children. As a member of the world community, the Philippines cannot escape the far-reaching effects of these phenomena. Globalization. The lowering of barriers to movement of products, services, workers and investments across national borders is effectively integrating food, energy, technology and finance into interlocking global systems. In recent years, global stocks of the major food commodities reached historic lows causing food prices to rise. This was exacerbated by the shift of maize and soybean supplies in the US and sugarcane in Brazil for biofuel production, contributing to as much as 30 percent of the weighted average increase in world grain prices from 2000 to 2007 (Rosegrant, 2008). The volatility and sharp rise in the price of oil made speculators shift their investment portfolios from energy to food commodity trading, further intensifying the pressure on world food prices. Producer countries anxious to keep domestic prices low made the situation worse by suspending food exports.

Rice, which the Philippines used to import at US\$200-300 per ton, skyrocketed to US\$800 per ton, causing large losses to the National Food Authority (NFA) which is tasked to maintain the supply and price of domestic rice.

Without global and regional food buffer stocks and more coherent, coordinated global governance and responses in place, more of these food supply and price shocks could be expected in the future. The Philippines, which imports huge amounts of rice, wheat, milk and ruminant meats, should be ready with substitutes and contingency plans for these eventualities.

Moreover, the Philippines is comparably a high-cost food producer. With the elimination of tariff barriers, Philippine produce is in danger of being overwhelmed by cheap food imports. The Philippine food sector must increase land, labor and input productivity as well as mitigate losses to bring unit production and marketing costs down to stay competitive.

Population Growth. World demand for food is expected to continue to rise because of continuing population growth as well as income growth in the developing countries, at a time when global agricultural productivity is stagnating and natural resources bases are becoming overexploited. Without significant new investments in rural infrastructure and in agricultural scientific research and innovation, global cereal demand will continue to outstrip cereal production, as what had happened between 2000 and 2007 which led to the recent food price crisis. Many developed countries, e.g., US, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, as well as middle-level countries like Brazil and Argentina still have significant potential to raise food production from land under fallow/conservation. The squeeze is on those poorer countries which have limited land relative to their population – like the Philippines.

With 10 million hectares of arable land supporting 90 million Filipinos, the per capita farmland availability is only 1,100 square meters. The only way out of the dilemma is: 1) to raise cropping

intensity from the current 1.23 to the potential 3.0 through effective water control, early maturing varieties, zero tillage, relay and multiple cropping, and 2) to maximize per hectare yields with better genetics, tolerance to environmental and biotic stresses and minimization of postharvest losses.

The Philippines also has another under-exploited potential for food production which landlocked countries do not enjoy – our fresh water and marine resources. Freshwater aquaculture and mariculture are vital sources of productivity growth, provided the long-term environment and ecological services of these natural resources are not impaired.

But most importantly, the national leadership must respond to the call of the majority of the population for a resolute population policy and program to moderate population growth.

Urbanization and Rising Incomes. Urbanization is proceeding rapidly in many developing countries including the Philippines. More efficient supply chains are needed to move farm produce from the countryside to the urban centers of population. In country after country, modern super/hyper markets are shortening the supply chains, improving farm gate prices and delivering higher quality produce at reasonable prices to urban consumers. However, they are threatening the livelihood of local wet market and sari-sari store operators.

Moreover, only the bigger, more progressive farmers are benefiting from the abbreviated supply chains. This development is significant to the Philippines, because the most food insecure people are the poor small farmers themselves. The corporate integrators must be provided incentives to make a real effort to help the truly small farmers participate in these modern supply systems as contract growers. Better yet, the small farmers themselves should organize into producer cooperatives to attain economies of scale.

The rapidly expanding economies particularly of China and India are creating intense pressure on the global food markets. As food preferences shift from cereals and root crops to meat, milk and eggs,

there is a wild scramble for maize, feed wheat, and soybean meal and fish meal to support domestic livestock and poultry industries.

The Philippines has felt the pressure on feed supplies with the rise in prices of feed wheat, maize, soybean meal and fish meal. Fortunately the Philippines has not exhausted its options. Corn farmers were encouraged by high corn farm gate prices to switch to high yielding, intensively managed corn hybrids of both the conventional and transgenic kind. Feed millers are shifting to cheaper cassava feed. Our feed scientists are revisiting the option of pretreating energy and protein-rich copra meal with microorganisms to improve their feeding value. Thus, we are confident that our domestic and poultry and swine industries can stay competitive with imports.

Rising Food Quality and Safety Standards. There is a growing awareness of the consequences of unsafe foods and unhealthy eating habits. Pesticide residue levels are now being closely monitored, and increasing numbers of more affluent people are willing to pay a premium for healthy, organically grown foods. The Philippines must adopt food safety and quality standards to keep in step with the rest of the world for the health and wellness of our people and to stay competitive in the world market.

Advances in Science and Technology. Advances in the understanding of ecology and biodiversity are making possible the increasing use of biological control measures in place of synthetic chemical pesticides to control pests and diseases. Integrated pest management technologies have drastically reduced the use of chemical pesticides in rice farms throughout Asia including the Philippines. Cocktails of beneficial microorganisms are now being routinely applied in the root zones of crops to fix nitrogen from the air, to make insoluble phosphates more available to plants, and to introduce microorganisms antagonistic to nematodes and other soil-borne disease microbes.

The Philippines is the first in Asia to install a credible genetically modified organism (GMO) crops risk assessment and monitoring system. GMO corn

with stacked traits of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) and herbicide tolerance genes were planted to close to 400,000 hectares in 2008 from which satisfied farmers derived the benefits of high yields (lower losses), lower labor and weeding costs, and less exposure to harmful pesticides.

This is one bright area of Philippines agriculture. Our national leadership and the scientific community anticipated the windfalls from the emerging innovations in ecology, genetics and biodiversity, microbiology and biotechnology and have invested over the years in highly trained manpower and research laboratories in these fields. In the pipeline are Pinoy GMOs for insect resistant rice and eggplant; rice fortified with beta carotene, iron and zinc; virus-resistant and slow-ripening papaya; and virus-resistant abaca and bananas. More are expected to come as our scientists master the crops and specific genes and traits uniquely important to our agriculture.

Climate Change, Natural Hazards and Growing Scarcity of Natural Resources. After the initial debate on the reality of global warming and climate change, evidence is piling up that indeed the polar ice caps are receding and the earth is indeed entering a warming phase. With the rise of ocean levels induced by global warming, low lying coastal areas and small islands will be inundated; salt will intrude into coastal farm lands; higher intensity and higher frequency of weather disturbances are anticipated; and grain yields in the tropics are expected to decline with higher night temperatures.

However, there will also be winners. Countries in the higher latitudes (mostly developed countries in Europe and North America) will enjoy longer growing seasons and more moderate winter temperatures. Photosynthetic rates will be higher with the higher concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The Philippines, while not being a major per capita contributor of greenhouse gases, will have to cope with the consequences of global warming and climate change. These global changes will take place over a long period of time, and so there is plenty of time to breed and select crops and

livestock adapted to these changing conditions. The more problematic as far as the Philippine is concerned is the mitigation of the consequences of natural hazards like landslides, typhoons and flooding which are expected to occur more frequently than in the past.

The natural resource which will become increasingly limited globally is the supply of freshwater for irrigation, industry and domestic uses. It is predicted that nations will fight over water resources. Fortunately for the Philippines, annual precipitation and groundwater supplies are able to supply our national requirements for freshwater, although there are regional imbalances in their availability. The country must therefore carefully plan now as it has started to do on how best to conserve, develop and utilize our water supplies.

Global and Regional Approaches to Food Security.

The recent food price crisis, the spike in oil prices, and the ongoing global recession highlight more than ever the need for a better global governance architecture for governing food, nutrition and agriculture (von Braun, 2009). Food, energy and political security are essentially linked in the global scale, and there are crucial trade-offs for which there is a need for stronger global mechanisms to respond to future challenges, to improve productivity and scale up investments, to expand nutrition and social protection, and to strengthen markets and trade.

Von Braun envisioned a new governance structure which will coordinate and link together the programs and activities of global entities like the World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) with that of national governments, the private sector and civil society, including large private foundations.

The key features of this new international order are the mechanisms and management of global and regional food reserves. At the minimum, von

Braun proposes that a modest international grain reserve be established to be used exclusively for emergency responses and humanitarian assistance. The grains could be supplied by the main grain-producing countries, provided funding by the G-8 + 5 countries, and managed by the World Food Programme.

Von Braun further proposes a second virtual reserve and intervention mechanism backed up by a financial fund to calm markets under speculative situations.

National Prescriptions for Food Security

View from the European Community. Much has been said about the magnitude, distribution and causes of food insecurity among continents, countries, population sectors, households and individuals as well as approaches, solutions and programs toward alleviating it. The following statement by Poul Nielsen (IFPRI, 2001b), on behalf of the European Community during an international conference for sustainable food security for all, comprehensively captures the basic directions, enabling conditions and complexities which need to be addressed to attain the universal goal of food security.

As far as the Philippines is concerned, all the observations and prescriptions apply, except for a glaring omission – the explicit reference to management of population growth. Poul Nielson, European Union Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, in IFPRI, 2001b (p.101), said:

The best way to achieve food security for all is to implement a broad-based policy for sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

Economic growth is a necessary condition for food security because it contributes to increased food production and a strengthened external trade position, which allows countries to import food

if necessary. However, growth is not a sufficient condition for food security. Above all it is essential to strengthen people's access by tackling poverty.

To bring about food security, we must therefore deliver growth with poverty reduction and equity. We must ensure that the poor are included in growth. That requires actions to develop markets, institutions, and infrastructures that are accessible to the poor, and to provide sustainable services focused on public goods.

In addition, we must give greater prominence to tackling the inequalities that are the bases of poverty and hunger. We cannot expect growth to deliver poverty reduction when there are large inequalities in human capital, employment, access to land, and other productive assets. We need to confront these inequalities by addressing issues of land tenure and land reform, generating employment, providing universal access to health and education services, making rural credit more available to those lacking collateral, and tackling policy biases that disadvantage the rural poor.

This includes addressing the lack of political participation and empowerment of the poor.

Attaining Food Security through the MDGs. The food security of the Filipino children in the 21st century is intimately linked with the attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Attainment of the 2015 targets is likely for many of the goals but would require extra efforts in some. Moreover, some of the targets are so modest that much more remains to be done.

The Philippine government through the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has identified the following key crosscutting issues in attaining the MDGs, namely:

1. Addressing the wide disparities among regions

2. Curbing the high population growth rate
3. Improving the performance of the agriculture sector
4. Accelerating the implementation of basic education and health reforms
5. Ensuring the strict enforcement of laws pertinent to the achievement of the MDGs
6. Bridging the financing gap
7. Strengthening the capacity of local government units (LGUs)
8. Ensuring transparency and accountability in government transactions
9. Addressing peace and security issues
10. Need for public-private partnership
11. Improving targeting, database and monitoring

These crosscutting concerns are reproduced without further comment because the explanations and the priority actions needed are obvious. Essays on the Philippine economy, development, policies and challenges could be found in Balisacan and Hill, eds. (2003). The problem is not one of understanding and expertise but of political will and sustained implementation.

Common Country Assessment by UN Team in Manila. The following excerpt from the situational analysis undertaken by the UN resident team in Manila is a fair and comprehensive characterization of the core problems and challenges besetting our country. Their observations are embodied in the Common Country Assessment document which sets the framework of the UN's engagement with the Philippines.

Core Problem # 1: Growth has been uneven and insufficient to reduce poverty deprivation and inequality. The economic growth the Philippines experienced in 2003-2007 was not accompanied

by a commensurate increase in decent employment. The increase in the share of the service sector employment points to the growth of the informal sector rather than the modern transformation of the economy.

The share of the agricultural sector in growth upon which the poor depend upon largely for employment/livelihood and incomes, and which is also crucial for national food security, has been declining.

The inadequate growth of the agricultural sector, on the other hand, is caused by: 1) low priority accorded to it by the national government; 2) perpetuation of a national food sufficiency policy that encourages resource allocation distortions within agriculture and across sectors; 3) inadequate research and development activities; 4) inequity in access to productive assets such as land ; 5) low resilience to natural hazards and climate change; 6) environmental degradation; 7) unequal access to productive assets and government services; and 8) governance and institutional weaknesses.

Core Problem # 2: Growth has not only been insufficient and uneven, it has also been exclusionary, particularly with reference to women and indigenous people.

Core Problem # 3. High population growth remains to be a major factor severely slowing down economic growth and poverty reduction; but more intractable are the culture/religion-based and political ideological barriers preventing the articulation of a comprehensive and coherent population management program.

Rapid population growth, particularly that which creates a demographic burden and one that grows disproportionately faster in relation to economic growth, is a strain on fiscal resources. It reduces per capita social spending and crowds out money and savings that could otherwise be used for investments.

Core Problem # 4. The country's vulnerability to natural hazards including climate change and the new challenges this brings to the current

decision environments at the various national and substantial levels threaten the modest gains of growth and deepen vulnerabilities and/or create new ones.

Core Problem # 5. Armed conflicts increase exclusion of socially underprivileged groups, hinder their claim for human security rights, and limit the potential development and growth of their locale.

Decades of protracted war between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), National Democratic Front (NDF), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front have resulted in slower economic growth for many parts of the country.

Food Security for Filipino Children Now

Food security cannot be discussed in a vacuum. Food security can only be fully comprehended in the context of the social, economic, political, cultural and demographic fabric of the nation. Hunger is tightly linked with poverty in a vicious embrace. The malnourished become poor, and the poor become malnourished. The underlying causes of poverty need to be understood and addressed if one were to make sustained progress in eradicating hunger and food insecurity.

Charitably the Philippines is making progress on the measures we chose to define the UN MDGs. However, the sobering fact remains that unacceptable numbers of Filipinos in the millions still go to bed hungry every night.

The current (2006) population below the subsistence threshold is 12.23 million (Table 16). Even if we succeed with the MDG target by 2015, there will still be 12.5 million hungry, malnourished Filipinos. At present there are 3.41 million underweight children between 0-5 years. By 2015 there will still be 2.65 million malnourished children.

Table 16. Magnitude of the food security challenge.

Statistic	MDG Target by 2015(%)	Estimated Numbers (millions)	
		2015	2006
Population Below Subsistence Threshold	12.15	12.5	12.23
Underweight Children, 0-5 Years	17.25	2.675	3.41

We simply must put our act together to get our economy moving on a broad front, modernizing the different sectors to make them competitive, creating decent employment for all in an increasing global economic environment, while husbanding our scarce natural resources.

Targeted Social Protection and Safety Nets. But would improving the macroeconomic conditions and broad economic indicators guarantee food security for all, particularly for our children?

The answer is NO. Improving policies and stimulating economic growth will not be sufficient to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (IFPRI, 2008). In the first place, economic growth must be pro-poor, must create decent jobs and livelihoods, and must be sustainable. In the meantime for many households left behind, targeted social protection programs and safety nets are necessary to offer them routes out of poverty and meet their immediate food needs.

Social protection programs directed at the poorest and most food insecure sectors of the population include conditional and non-conditional cash transfer programs, emergency assistance in the form of cash and/or food, school feeding programs, maternal and child health and nutrition program, public works targeted at vulnerable groups, and community-driven public works programs. Many of these programs are in place in Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mexico, and many others including the Philippines.

The needed reforms in the economic, social, cultural, political, demographic and environmental spheres of our national life will take time to take root and yield dividends. In the meantime our

young cannot wait. The immediate challenge is putting in place remedial measures and programs to enhance food security with the limited resources and impediments at hand.

Two poor countries come to mind - Cuba and Sri Lanka – whose human development indices are comparable to those with higher levels of economic development. In other words it can be done.

Nutrition-Driven Interventions. The current numbers of malnourished children between 0-5 years is 3.41 million. If they are not saved now, apart from the immorality and inhumanity of allowing so many children to suffer, they will constitute a continuing drag on our economy. Better we invest on them now.

Among the initiatives specifically directed at nutrition are:

- Massive campaign for breastfeeding. Children are most nutritionally vulnerable during the first two years. The most direct intervention is breastfeeding by mothers. We need massive tri-media support to persuade mothers that it is intelligent, moral and fashionable to keep nursing their babies as long as possible.
- School milk-feeding. The numbers of most severely affected children who can be fed with milk in schools can be manageable if they are carefully targeted. Milk is still the best natural food for children. However, milk in the school feeding program need not be fresh cow or carabao milk. Skim milk powder reconstituted with inexpensive coconut oil is cheaper and more healthy. The milk in the school feeding program can be fortified with iron and essential vitamins at minimal additional cost.
- Home-made weaning baby foods. Beyond breastfeeding and supplemental milk and milk products, children obtain increasing sustenance from complementary foods as they get older. The challenge is educating, training and exhorting mothers to concoct nutritious, good tasting and sanitary baby foods with whatever is available in the home – rice and vegetable oil for calories; eggs, fish, meat and

beans for protein and minerals; vegetables and fruits in season for vitamins and minerals and fiber.

- Iron and vitamin A supplementation. We are losing the battle against anemia and vitamin A deficiency. We should infuse more resources in the iron and vitamin A supplementation programs for children. Again the costs could be moderated by targeting the most vulnerable households and communities.
- Nutrition education and extension. We have many success stories in community-level organizing, nutrition education, and extension. Among others, the Food Always in the Home (FAITH) gardening program of Dr. Florentino Solon must be given fresh impetus. The Barangay Integrated Development Approach for Nutrition Improvement (BIDANI) program initiated by Dr. Josefa Eusebio at UP Los Baños mobilizing SUCs for nutrition promotion in the barangays will not require much funding to get going again.

We do not have to reinvent the wheel. There are countless NGOs, LGUs, schools and corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects working their heart out to address malnutrition among the poor. Let's establish a competitive grant fund where the more serious grassroots organizations can obtain matching grants to popularize home, school and community vegetable gardens.

- Institutional support. Finally we have existing human nutrition institutions which have been giving inspiration, direction and expertise to nutrition efforts all these years. Among them are the National Nutrition Council, the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the many colleges of home economics and nutrition, and the professional organizations of nutritionists and dieticians. We must inject a new sense of urgency in them by clear messages from Congress and the Executive Branch, recognizing their contributions and assuring them of all-out support.

Summary and Conclusions

Poverty and food insecurity are tightly linked social conditions. The food-deprived are invariably those mired in absolute poverty.

The latest statistics (FAO, 2008) show that about 923 million people in the world still live below the poverty line and do not have sufficient food to eat. This, in spite of the world community resolve in the 1996 World Food Summit and later enshrined as the UN Millennium Development Goal No. 1 to eradicate poverty and hunger.

The Philippines is on its way to fulfilling its commitment to the UN MDG of halving the proportion of its population below the subsistence and poverty thresholds by 2015 from the baseline statistics of 1990. The proportion of Filipinos below the subsistence threshold declined from 24.3 percent in 1990 to 13.5 percent in 2006. Likewise the proportion of Filipinos below the poverty threshold decreased from 45.3 percent in 1990 to 30.0 percent in 2006.

Although poverty and food insecurity incidences are declining, they remain painfully and embarrassingly high. The proportion of households with per capita energy intake below 100 percent of the dietary energy requirement was a staggering 56.9 percent in 2006. The prevalence of malnutrition among children 0-5 years old was 24.6 percent in 2006. In absolute numbers, 12.23 million Filipinos were below the subsistence threshold in 2006. By 2015 even if the Philippines were to attain its UN MDG target, there will still be 12.5 million hungry Filipinos.

There were 3.41 million underweight Filipino children between 0-5 years in 2006. By 2015 there will still be 2.675 million underweight Filipino children.

The national nutrition surveys describe more fully the nature of food insecurity among Filipinos. On the average Filipino children do not consume sufficient energy, iron, calcium and Vitamin A. Their protein intake is marginally adequate. This lack of proper nutrition is reflected in the weight and

height for age measurements. At age five years, 27.3 percent of Filipino children are underweight for age, and 38.2 percent are underheight for age.

In terms of specific targeted nutrients, there were no improvements in the iron and vitamin A intakes of Filipino children during the last six years. The only bright picture is on iodine nutrition which has improved dramatically with the implementation of the table salt iodine fortification law.

Food security has three dimensions, namely, first, the physical availability of food in the country; second, the access to food not only by all households but also by all members of the households; and third, the proper biological utilization of the food taken in.

As far as physical availability is concerned, the Philippines is able to produce sufficient sugar, cooking oil, fish, poultry, eggs, pork, vegetables and fruits for its own requirements. However, the country depends on the world market for its rice, wheat, milk and ruminant meat needs.

Between the two staples, rice and white corn, the Philippines is a perennial, huge importer of rice but is self-sufficient in white corn.

The national policy is self-sufficiency for these two staples, and country's agricultural development program is heavily oriented towards achieving rice self-sufficiency.

The access to food by all households is a function of assets, incomes and employment, and affordability. Since poverty and lack of assets and income are more severe among the rural folks, modernization of agriculture will have to be a major part of the solution, i.e., implementation of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) of 1997, to raise productivity, create livelihoods and further raise value added in agricultural produce (Dy et al., 2008).

Food prices in the country are very high compared with our ASEAN neighbors. These high food prices are brought about by low farm productivity; high energy, credit and input costs; and inefficiencies

in postharvest, transport and market facilities. Likewise, these ills will have to be addressed by AFMA.

The third dimension of proper biological utilization of food can be addressed by proper education, particularly of mothers in preparing balanced, nutritious and sanitary food in the homes. Moreover, households must have access to clean potable water and clean toilets to keep them safe from diarrhea and other debilitating diseases which render the ingested food ineffective.

The food security prospects for Filipinos in general and for Filipino children in particular, in the immediate to medium term, are not very encouraging. As pointed out in the resident UN team country report, recent economic growth (2003-2007) has been uneven and insufficient to reduce poverty and inequality. The economic growth the Philippines experienced in recent years has not been accompanied by a commensurate increase in decent employment. The share of the agricultural sector, upon which the poor depend largely for livelihood and incomes and which is crucial for food security, has been declining.

Moreover, while population growth has declined from 2.36 percent to 2.0 percent, population pressure remains high, putting a strain on fiscal resources, reducing per capita social spending, and crowding out savings that otherwise could be used for productive investments.

Further, food insecurity precisely in the economically backward regions is exacerbated by the long-festering communist insurgency and the age-old armed conflict with Muslim separatists in southern Philippines. Unfortunately, resolution of both conflicts is not likely in the foreseeable future.

Superimposed on these local political and social concerns are several global trends which ultimately impact on food supplies and trade. These trends are: globalization; urbanization and rising incomes particularly in China, India and other rapidly industrializing countries; rising food quality and safety standards; climate change, natural hazards and growing scarcity of natural resources; and the advent of advances in science and technology, in

particular, genetically modified or transgenic crops, fish and livestock.

As a net food importer, hugely dependent on imports of rice, milk, wheat and ruminant meat, the Philippines is very vulnerable to rapid shifts in global supplies, prices and trade of these food commodities. Stability and predictability of global food supply and prices will have to wait for a better coordinated and coherent system of global governance in food, agriculture, energy and finance. The Philippines in the pursuit of its own national interest should espouse the establishment of a food reserve at least in the ASEAN region.

On the positive side of the ledger for the Philippines, as far as food security is concerned, are suitable temperature and sunlight conditions throughout the year; ample precipitation and underground freshwater supply; a fairly well-developed infrastructure for scientific agriculture; and hard-working, fairly educated/educable farmers and fisherfolk.

Except for wheat, milk and ruminant meat, the country can be self-sufficient in the rest of its food needs including rice, provided the country follows through with the long deferred/neglected public investments in the rural sector. If the investments in rural infrastructures and institutions mandated under the AFMA of 1997 are put in place, the recurring shortage of rice can be laid to rest and poverty which is largely a rural phenomenon can be significantly alleviated.

Only a third of the country's land area is arable (10 million out of 30 million hectares). The current cropping intensity is 1.23. With better managed irrigation systems, with earlier maturing varieties, with conservation tillage, intercropping and other agronomic techniques, and with the potential to grow crops, all year round, a cropping intensity of 3.0 is attainable, effectively tripling our domestic capacity to produce food. Production and postharvest losses, which can rise to as much as 30 percent of the potential productivity, could be saved with better integrated pest management and installation of proper postharvest, transport and storage facilities.

The country is not wanting in expert economists, agricultural scientists, social scientists, demographers and nutritionists who can analyze and prescribe what needs to be done to address poverty and food insecurity. The NEDA MDG mid-term report (2007) identified 11 key crosscutting issues in attaining the UN MDGs, namely:

1. Addressing the wide disparities among regions
2. Curbing the high population growth rate
3. Improving the performance of the agriculture sector
4. Accelerating the implementation of basic education and health reforms
5. Ensuring the strict enforcement of laws pertinent to the achievement of the MDGs
6. Bridging the financing gap
7. Strengthening the capacity of LGUs
8. Ensuring transparency and accountability in government transactions
9. Addressing peace and security issues
10. Need for public-private partnership
11. Improving targeting, database and monitoring

The problem is not one of understanding and expertise but of political will and sustained implementation. We must simply put our act together to get our economy moving on a broad front, modernizing the different sectors to make them competitive, creating decent employment for all in an increasingly global economic environment, while husbanding our scarce natural resources.

Nevertheless, improving the macroeconomic environment and the broad economic indicators, while vital, is not sufficient to guarantee food security for all, particularly the children.

The needed reforms in the economic, social, cultural, political, demographic and environmental spheres of our national life will take time to take root and yield dividends. In the meantime those in abject poverty and the young cannot wait. The immediate challenge is putting in place remedial measures and programs to enhance food security with the limited resources and impediments at hand. We need to provide social protection and safety nets for households left behind to offer them routes out of poverty and help them meet their immediate food needs.

Examples of social protection programs include cash transfers, food for work, nutrition and maternal health extension, and specific nutrition-directed interventions such as promotion of breastfeeding, training of mothers to prepare home-made nutritious weaning baby foods, school milk-feeding, and promotion of home, school and community vegetable gardens.

All these programs are in place. It is a matter of putting the needed resources into them and sustaining their implementation from one administration to the next.

Finally, the malnourished Filipino children in 2015 are yet to be born. We know that majority of them will come from depressed conflict-ridden regions, disadvantaged communities, and very poor households. We have to address their needs now to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and malnutrition. Even with current resources, the dismal statistics of poverty and malnutrition could be significantly reduced by carefully targeted social protection programs and nutrition-driven interventions. And equally important, a sustained responsible parenthood, family planning program.

Endnotes

- ¹ People in developing countries need between 1720 to 1960 K cal per day for basal metabolism and light activity (FAO 2002).
- ² See box for Self-Sufficiency in Rice and White Corn.

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Changing Tomorrow's Health Today

By Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan

The 1990s was a time of global commitment to children's welfare. World leaders came together at the United Nations to take part in the World Summit for Children. Numerous national governments committed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a universally agreed upon set of non-negotiable standards and obligations for the world's children (UNICEF website). By ratifying the CRC, the Philippines joined the international community in legally binding itself to protect the rights of children.

Drafted in 2000, the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (or simply, Child 21) envisions movement towards a child-friendly society. It is a long-term framework for the Filipino children of the 21st century, weaving the rights of children into the different stages of the child's development.

Areas of concern in health care throughout the child's life cycle are still numerous. Today,

- 162 women die during pregnancy and childbirth, or shortly thereafter, for every 100,000 livebirths.
- 24 infants die before their first birthday for every 1,000 livebirths.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases remain as leading cause of mortality in children under 5 years of age.
- Increasing sexual risk behavior is being observed among adolescents who are not amply informed regarding sexually-transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Although these figures provide us with a peek into the future of child health, we can paint a comprehensive picture more effectively by establishing trends with the aid of past figures as well.

Leaping Over Hurdles in the Filipino Child's Health

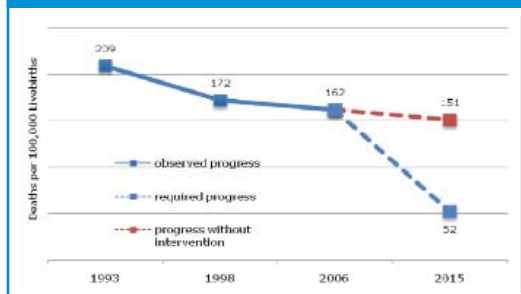
Making projections for 2015 and 2025 entailed using data from the various surveys conducted in the past 10 to 15 years; to name a few, the 1993 National Demographic Survey (NDS), the 1998 and the 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), and the 2006 Family Planning Survey (FPS). Computations for targets were made based on identified goals of the UN program "A World Fit for Children" and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These calculations revealed a wide variety of possible scenarios – ranging from the encouraging to those crying out for interventions to be made today to neutralize or, hopefully, create positive impact by 2015 and 2025.

Mortality

There is evident progress in major health indicators, namely, maternal, infant and under-five mortality ratios. The decline, however, is no cause for assurance. The question of whether the improvements are enough to reach the MDGs still remains to be answered. It is also noteworthy that mortality ratios vary across geographic locations, levels of income, and educational attainment. In general, mortality rates are lower among families from the urban areas and from those with higher levels of income and education.

Although the country's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) shows a steadily declining trend (Figure 1), the observed progress from 1993-1998 (annual estimated decline of 7.4 maternal deaths per 100,000 livebirths) to 1999-2006 (annual estimated decline of 1.25 per 100,000) is also decreasing. If the current progress is sustained, the MMR by 2015 will be 151 deaths per 100,000. This is a far cry from the 2015 target of reducing it by three-fourths (52 per 100,000), which requires a decline of 12.2 deaths per 100,000 per year to reach it. These estimates, however, are associated with large sampling errors due to the relative rarity of maternal deaths (Stanton et al., 1997 as cited by NSO, 1999).

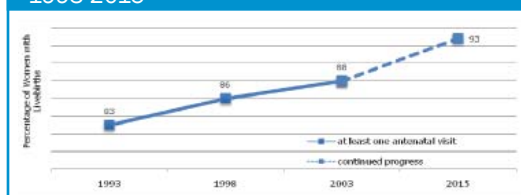
Figure 1. Maternal deaths per 100,000 livebirths, 1993-2015



Inadequate antenatal care and the high incidence of high-risk births are factors that still contribute to the risk of dying during pregnancy and childbirth. Post-partum hemorrhage, sepsis/severe infections, hypertensive disorders in pregnancy and obstructed labor remain as the major causes of maternal deaths, but these complications may be prevented by having skilled attendance at delivery. Antenatal care (providing patient education, immunization, iron prophylaxis and preparation for transport and safe delivery) may also contribute to the improvement of outcomes through early detection of risks.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of women aged 15-49 years receiving antenatal care for their most recent birth. It reveals that the proportion of women being attended at least once by a skilled health provider is increasing modestly. By sustaining this modest gain from 2003 to 2015, 93 percent of women will be seen at least once during pregnancy. However, it is important to note that the minimum number of antenatal visits as surveyed is in itself inadequate and that complete care is received by only a few.

Figure 2. Percentage of women aged 15-49 with livebirths having at least one antenatal visit, 1993-2015



We should also recognize that the national data available may not be entirely true at the regional and local levels. Investments in improving antenatal care should be made, especially for disadvantaged groups such as those living in far-flung areas and in poorer communities where availability and accessibility of skilled health workers and affordability of care remain as major issues to be addressed.

As previously mentioned, the major causes of maternal deaths may be addressed through skilled attendance. However, delivery care in the Philippines still widely varies. As management for complications during childbirth may be given more properly when assisted by doctors, nurses and other trained health professionals, delivery assistance by them is the ideal. It is also more preferable for deliveries to be done in health facilities rather than at home.

The Department of Health (DOH) developed the policy to shift from the strategy of high-risk pregnancy identification to the Emergency Obstetric Care (EmOC) approach to reduce maternal mortality. The EmOC approach is based on the Three Delays Model, which outlines the three delays in obtaining emergency obstetric care, namely, Delay in Recognizing Danger Signs and Deciding to Seek Care, Delay in Reaching Appropriate Care, and Delay in Receiving Care at Health Facilities (Thaddeus and Maine, 1994). Under EmOC, all pregnant women are considered to be at risk as more than 80 percent of maternal deaths are due to complications for which no antenatal screening is possible.

Nationally, there is a continuing increase in the number of deliveries assisted by trained health professionals and the number of deliveries in health facilities (Figures 3 and 4). Also noted was a corresponding decrease in the number of deliveries assisted by traditional birth attendants, more commonly known in the Philippines as hilot and those done at home. However, despite the consistent decline, the portions assisted by hilot and those done at home in 2003 remain large (37.1% and 61.4%, respectively).

Figure 3. Delivery assistance of livebirths, 1993-2003

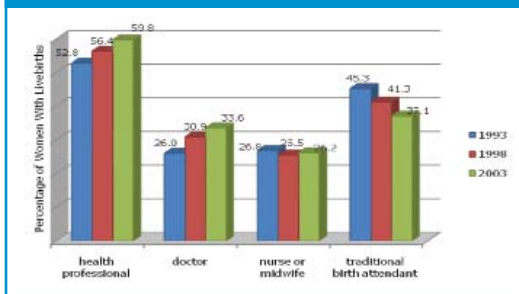
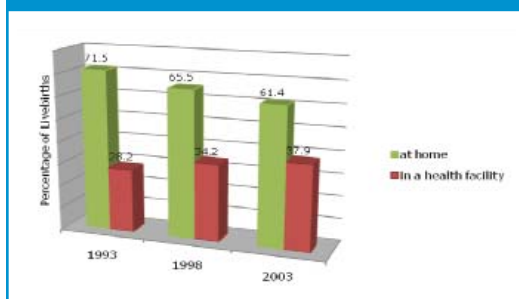


Figure 4. Place of delivery of livebirths, 1993-2003



A cause for even greater concern is that these improvements are not totally reflective of demographic data. As with mortality rates, geographic location, socioeconomic status and educational attainment of families are factors that affect decisions related to giving birth. Across the different surveys, it has been noted that deliveries assisted by the hilot and/or those done at home are more likely in poorer families, those living in rural areas and those whose mothers did not receive education or reached the grade school level. Summarized in Table 1 are the results of the 2003 NDHS revealing this disparity.

The disparity is showing that although there is a nationwide policy to encourage deliveries in health care facilities, large groups of people are not fully benefitted by this. We should continue to focus efforts to address the matter at hand – that majority of births are still being delivered at home. There is a great need to correct the prevailing mindset among health policymakers and providers that relies on the risk assessment approach and the hilot in maternal care. The implementation of

Table 1. Percentage of births assisted by a doctor and delivered in a health facility by socioeconomic status, location and educational attainment, 2003

Demographic Groups		Assisted by a Doctor	Delivered in a Health Facility
Wealth Index Quintile	Lowest	8.6	10.4
	Highest	73.2	77.1
Location	Rural	19.2	22.1
	Urban	48.2	53.8
Educational Attainment	No education	2.1	3.7
	College or higher	64.8	69.2

the Protocol for Home Deliveries, issued in 1994, may need to be monitored and reassessed. The depletion of skilled health personnel also remains to be a major problem and, with the inadequate funding, contributes to a poor maternal health care system that continues to rely on the hilot.

We need to improve the distribution of skilled attendants and, additionally, more effectively involve traditional attendants in skill-attendant strategies. Traditional attendants should more strongly advocate skilled care, be linked with transport and communication facilities for efficient emergency referrals, and be trained in recognizing problems and stabilizing patients. These competencies in birth assistance may be taught through seminars and workshops, targeting the poorest and farthest communities.

A large proportion of infant deaths result from poor maternal health care during pregnancy and delivery. Studies also show that the unmet need for birth spacing puts both mothers and infants at risk for various adverse outcomes. It may also be important to note that perinatal and neonatal deaths constitute more than 50 percent of all infant mortality. The most common causes of infant deaths are conditions emanating from the perinatal period (61.8%) and pneumonia (10%).

The implementation of programs and policies for maternal health, such as the EmOC approach, may also reduce infant mortality, as maternal and child health programs bring complementary benefits

to both the mother and infant. In the Philippines, a reduction in the Infant Mortality Ratio (IMR) and Under-Five Mortality Ratio (UMR) has been observed since 1990. The likelihood of reducing both IMR and UMR by two-thirds in 2015 is high. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, the goal may even be surpassed by sustaining the current progress, even without further intervention.

Figure 5. Infant deaths per 1,000 livebirths, 1990-2015

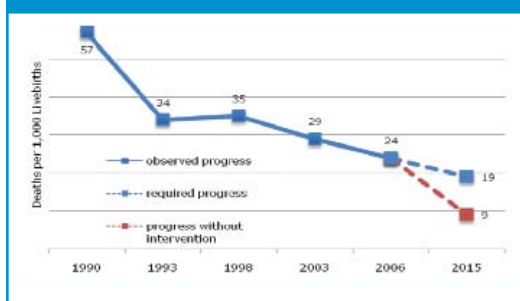
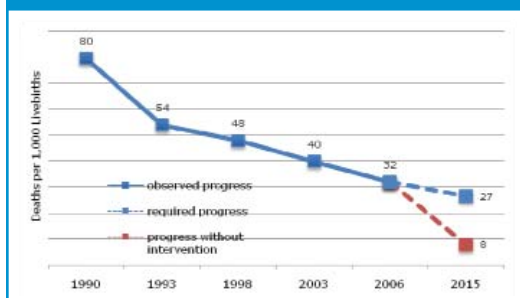


Figure 6. Deaths in children under five years per 1,000 livebirths, 1990-2015



But as with maternal mortality, there exists an inverse relationship of infant and childhood mortality with the mother's socioeconomic status and educational attainment. Table 2 summarizes the results of the 2003 NDHS showing the glaring disparity of infant and child mortality across the groups. The proportion of deaths have also been observed to be lower in urban than in rural areas. Based on regional data, the low performers in 2003 were Region IVB (Mimaropa) with 44 infant deaths per 1,000 livebirths and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with 72 deaths in children under five years of age per 1,000 livebirths.

Table 2. Infant and under-five mortality by socioeconomic status, location and educational attainment, 2003

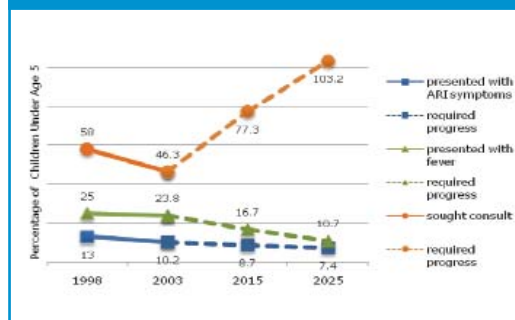
Demographic Groups		IMR	UMR
Wealth Index Quintile	Lowest	42	66
	Highest	19	21
Location	Rural	36	52
	Urban	24	30
Educational Attainment	No education	65	105
	College or higher	15	18

On top of national efforts to reduce IMR and UMR, attempts to teach the value of birth spacing and child care should be geared towards the less privileged groups and low-performing regions to accelerate improvements.

Preventable Diseases

Preventable diseases such as acute respiratory infections (ARIs) and diarrhea are still common causes of childhood illness and death. In the 1998 and 2003 NDHS, mothers of children under five years of age were asked for the occurrence of symptoms of ARI and fever in the two weeks preceding the survey. The percentage of children under five years of age presenting with cough accompanied by short, rapid breathing decreased by 0.56 percent per year (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percentage of children under age 5 presenting with ARI symptoms and/or fever and percentage of which seeking consult, 1998-2015



To achieve the goal of decreasing ARI occurrence by a third in 2015, an annual decline of at least 0.13 percent from 2003 should be observed. The likelihood the target will be achieved is high, considering that the observed decrease from 1998 to 2003 surpasses the required minimum decrease from 2003 onwards. Also shown in Figure 7 are the projected values for 2025, provided this minimum decline will be sustained from 2015.

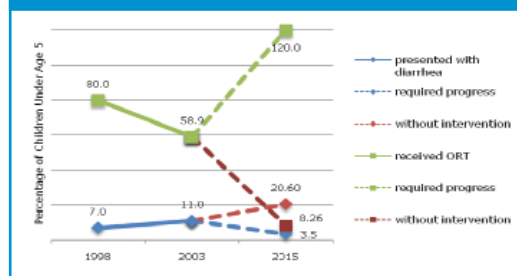
Despite these promising figures on the occurrence of respiratory infections, a decline in consults from a health facility or provider was also observed. In 1990-1991, training for more than 80 percent of health care providers was spearheaded by the National Control of ARI Program. However, the training program met problems of sustainability along the way. Different stakeholders may need to come together to revise or reinforce its program design. If left unchecked, the projected percentage of consults will decrease to 18.22 percent in 2015 and to more than 100 percent by 2025. But if an annual increase of 2.59 percent will be observed from 2003 onwards, the percentage of those seeking consult for ARIs may still rise to achieve the target.

In addition to reinforcing the training program for health care providers, we may also need to further educate and encourage mothers in being keen in identifying danger signs and in seeking consult for ARI. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials may be developed and mass produced for distribution to local government units to supplement and support the work of our community health care providers.

Seven percent and 11 percent of children under age five had diarrhea in the two weeks preceding the 1998 and 2003 survey, respectively (Figure 8). This translates to a 0.8 percent increase in the number of affected children per year. Without intervention, the proportion of children with diarrhea will go up to 20.60 percent by 2015.

In the 2003 survey, the occurrence of diarrhea was correlated with the mother's educational status; it was noted to be highest among children with mothers who did not receive education (13.4%)

Figure 8. Percentage of children under age 5 presenting with diarrhea and percentage of which receiving oral rehydration therapy, 1998-2015



and lowest among the group whose mothers reached at least the college level (8.4%). Only 32.4 percent of those who were reported to have had diarrhea were taken to a health facility.

Halving deaths due to diarrhea is a formidable task considering that the proportion of affected children receiving oral rehydration therapy (ORT) is declining. Despite the fact that 91.8 percent of all mothers surveyed had the knowledge of ORS packets, only 58.9 percent received ORT, while 22.4 percent did not receive any treatment.

In the earlier survey, around 80 percent of those affected received ORT, representing a decline of 4.22 percent per year. In the 2002 study named "Evaluation of the National Control of Diarrheal Disease Program in the Philippines, 1980-1993," results showed that ORS packets were sufficiently produced but were underutilized due to distribution problems. We may need to pinpoint the bottleneck in distribution of this resource to the communities and venture into improving this process, rather than investing in production of greater supply without addressing the root cause of underutilization.

Additionally, we may also focus our attention on teaching families and community health workers on the ill-effects of dehydration in diarrhea and the value of using ORS packets in preventing it. Regional data shows that in the National Capital Region (NCR), 96.7 percent of mothers had knowledge of ORS packets. However, the same applies to only 79.9 percent in Caraga Region, a

figure well below the country average. Efforts to further educate may be targeted in areas such as this, to maximize results.

We may also make further improvements in promoting the use of other forms of ORT, namely, recommended homemade fluid and increased fluids. Knowledge of these alternatives may be especially useful where accessibility to care and, in particular, these rehydration packets remain a lingering issue in the community.

Table 3 summarizes data from the 2003 NDHS, clearly showing that a larger proportion of children from rural areas, those belonging to poor families and whose mothers received no education are affected by preventable diseases. This imbalance becomes more evident with regional data. In Region IX (Zamboanga Peninsula), for example, only 4.2 of children presented with signs and symptoms of diarrhea. At the other end of the spectrum is the Cordilleras, with 20.4 percent of children affected.

The underprivileged groups, though they are more prone of becoming ill with preventable diseases, are less likely to seek treatment, as shown in Table 3. This puts them at a greater disadvantage than where they already are to begin with. Though there is a need to make attempts in improving our performance at the national level, there is an even greater need to focus efforts on low-performing regions and disadvantaged groups. We should target the far-flung, poorer areas in the training of health care providers and mothers on the

recognition, treatment and prevention of these diseases, as they would most benefit from having the ability to manage these at the community level. Since health care may not be readily accessible to them, empowering the community may prove to be of great value in accelerating our improvement. Immunization

In 1992, the country reaffirmed its previous commitment to universal child immunization. Today, nationwide immunization programs are being implemented to provide children with vaccines against the six preventable childhood diseases (namely, tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, and measles) before their first birthday. However, the proportion of children receiving the recommended vaccines before 12 months of age took an annual dip of one percent from 1998 to 2003 (Figure 9). If this observed decline continues to 2015, only 48 percent of children will have been fully immunized before their first birthday.

Figure 9. Percentage of infants receiving full immunization before their first birthday, 1993-2015

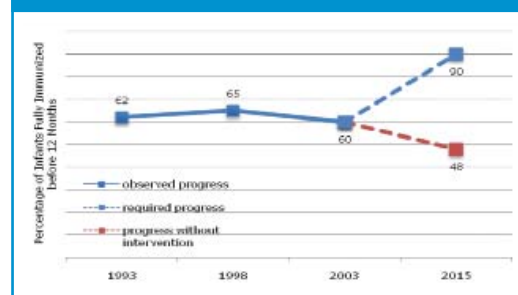


Table 3. Prevalence of preventable diseases by socioeconomic status, location and educational attainment, 2003

Demographic Groups		Presented with ARI symptoms	Sought consult for cough and/or fever	Presented with diarrhea	Received ORT
Quintile	Lowest	14.6	43.6	13.0	49.8
	Highest	5.8	57.0	9.2	64.0
Location	Rural	12.2	42.9	10.6	50.2
	Urban	8.3	50.5	10.7	67.6
Educational Attainment	No education	11.8	29.1	13.4	45.9
	College or higher	6.9	50.1	8.4	67.4

To ensure a 90 percent national coverage by 2015, the annual required change from 2003 onwards is 2.5 percent. Comparing this with the annual observed increase of 0.6 percent in 1993 to 1998, tremendous efforts will need to be exerted to reach the target, and different stakeholders may need to re-intensify their support for the currently implemented program.

On top of this observed decline in national performance is the matter of alarming discrepancy across the socioeconomic groups, location and educational attainment. Table 4 summarizes 2003 NDHS data showing the huge difference between these various groups. The percentage of children from uneducated families who have not received any vaccines is almost 20 times more than those belonging to families that have reached college level. This is a strong cue for us to realign our efforts to educate and communicate with the need to reach families that have not received education. In this case, messages on immunization coursed through radio and television may prove to be of more value than print messages in the form of newspaper and magazine ads, posters and pamphlets.

Available regional data also highlights this discrepancy, as the percentage of those not receiving vaccines went as low as 2.0 percent in Mimaropa and as high as 22.6 percent in the Zamboanga Peninsula and 26.3 percent in Caraga. Nationally, Wednesdays have been designated as our immunization day. However, the difference in frequency of immunization in different areas may be pointing to why such discrepancy in performance even exists. In community health stations, immunizations are done monthly, whereas it is only done quarterly in far-flung areas. We may need to make more investments in reaching the groups living in remote areas to balance out this inequality.

Table 4. Percentage of children aged 12-23 months who have not received any vaccine, by socioeconomic status, location and educational attainment, 2003

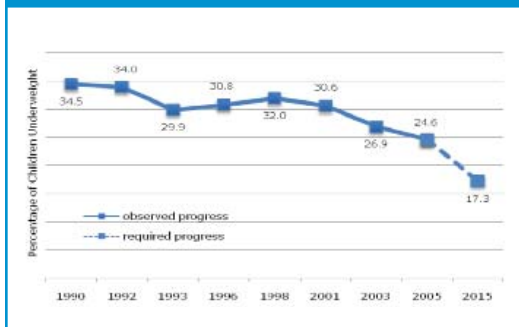
Demographic Groups		No vaccination
Wealth Index Quintile	Lowest	15.1
	Highest	2.2
Location	Rural	8.5
	Urban	6.1
Educational Attainment	No education	45.7
	College or higher	2.3

Malnutrition

Malnutrition continues to be a problem in the Philippines. Data from the 2003 National Nutrition Survey (NNS) revealed that of all Filipino children, only 71 percent are of normal weight, with 27 percent underweight, 30 percent stunted, 5.5 percent wasted and 1.4 percent overweight among the 0-5 age group. Using the base population of 90 million, the combined proportion of malnourished children from this age group is still a whopping 6.9 million.

The proportion of underweight children below five years of age has been waxing and waning in the last two decades (Figure 10). However, a decreasing trend was noted from 1998 to 2005. The rate of decline in these years, if sustained until 2015, will be more than enough to meet the minimum required change of 0.74 percent yearly to reduce child malnutrition by half. However, regional data from a study done by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science & Technology shows that in 2001, the only region performing above the country average for malnutrition was NCR, with only 20.3 percent of children from 0-5 years of age being underweight. The low performers identified in this study were Region V (Bicol) with 37.8 percent, Region VI (Western Visayas) with 35.2 percent and Region X (Northern Mindanao) with 34.1 percent.

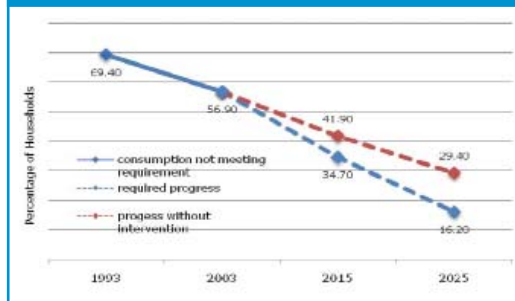
Figure 10. Percentage of underweight children under 5 years of age, 1990-2015



There are several nationwide programs already in place to improve nutritional status, including the Philippine Food Fortification Law, the Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide of 1995 and the Sangkap Pinoy Seal Program of 2003. These aim to make available and tag fortified staple food and to promote the use of iodized salt in food preparation both in food establishments and at home. Although these programs address issues relating to malnutrition, additional projects may be developed and targeted in low-performing areas. Nutrition and diet counseling for parents may also help improve the nutritional status of children.

Although food consumption of 69.4 percent of the population was below the recommended level of dietary energy requirement in 1993 (Figure 11), the probability of reaching the MDG is high considering the annual decline of 1.25 percent from 1993 to 2003. The 2003 NNS revealed that 21 percent of children experienced food insecurity in the past six months preceding the study, with 18 percent of children missing their meals, 8.2 percent experiencing not eating for an entire day

Figure 11. Percentage of households with per capita food intake less than 100% of the dietary requirement, 1993-2025



and 15.1 percent going hungry because there was no food or money to buy food. But only a decline of 1.85 percent yearly from 2003 to 2015 will be required to reach the MDG.

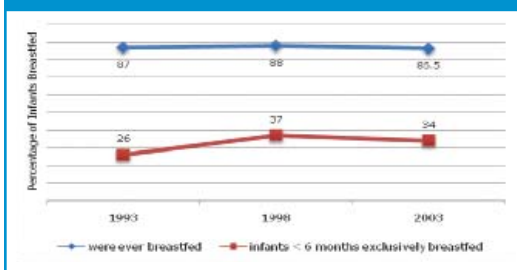
If this recommended progress is sustained from 2015 to 2025, the proportion of households with per capita intake of food less than the recommended dietary requirements will go down to 16.20 percent. The government-launched Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition tried to address this issue by distributing rice among public school pupils in the poor provinces and by food fortification.

However, the food crisis experienced by the country in the past year caused great food insecurity among Filipinos. Even the coverage for the Food for School Program was decreased from 40 of the food-poorest provinces to only 20 in response to the decreasing rice supply. We may soon be seeing a movement against the projected trend due to the food crisis of 2008.

Breastfeeding

It is widely known in the Philippines that exclusive breastfeeding provides nutritional and immunological benefits to newborns. Policies dating back to 1986 (Milk Code) to the Rooming-In and Breastfeeding Act of 1992 up to the more recent National Policies on Infant and Young Child Feeding of 2005 promote breastfeeding as the safe and adequate nutrition of infants. It is of no wonder that 87-88 percent of Filipino mothers breastfeed their children (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Percentage of infants that were ever breastfed and breastfed exclusively for the first six months, 1993-2003



The government, in fact, is continually committing itself to preserving the culture of breastfeeding in the country. In 2006, for example, the Presidential Proclamation to participate in the World Breastfeeding Week was signed. This enjoined stakeholders from government offices, local government units, and non-governmental and private sectors to mobilize their networks to sustain a high level of awareness, support and protection of breastfeeding.

Other projects are also being undertaken such as Sabay-Sabay Sumuso sa Nanay, a simultaneous breastfeeding activity in community health centers, hospital, clinics and other venues to raise awareness in breastfeeding. The City of Manila was included in the Guinness World Book of Records for having mobilized 3,541 mothers to simultaneously breastfeed their children. However, despite these additional attempts to promote breastfeeding, only a third of infants are exclusively breastfed in the first six months of life. A dip in its incidence was even noted from 1998 to 2003.

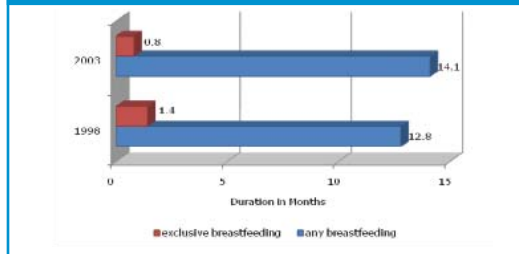
Table 5 summarizes data from the 2003 NDHS on the percentage of infants ever breastfed across demographic groups. Unlike most data showing performance between socioeconomic status, educational attainment and geographic location, the better performers are the poorer families, those whose mothers received no education and those coming from rural areas.

Table 5. Percentage of children who were ever breastfed, by socioeconomic status, location and educational attainment, 2003

Demographic Groups		Breastfed
Wealth Index Quintile	Lowest	93.2
	Highest	78.9
Location	Rural	90.7
	Urban	82.4
Educational Attainment	No education	94.8
	College or higher	81.7

This may be so because of the strong promotion of breastfeeding as a measure that may be taken against poverty, as it is the least costly source of infant nutrition. Advocacy in breastfeeding is under way in the poorest provinces of the nation. Trainings on Infant and Young Child Feeding and Care are also being conducted to teach community health workers and midwives on the benefits of breastfeeding to ensure that they will have the knowledge and ability to encourage mothers to breastfeed their children and to give sound advice on safe, age-appropriate and adequate feeding after six months up to two years and beyond. The low-performing regions were Region IVA (Calabarzon) with only 76.1 percent and NCR with 78.3 percent. One of the identified reasons for the preference for formula feeding is the need for mothers to work. Another concern is the decreasing mean duration for exclusive breastfeeding from 1.4 to 0.8 months (Figure 13). Although the mean duration of breastfeeding increased from 1998 to 2003, the recommended practice is for exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months after birth.

Figure 13. Mean duration of breastfeeding in months, 1998-2003



In these urban areas where a large proportion of mothers work outside the home, breastfeeding may be promoted through the establishment of breastfeeding areas in the workplace and breastfeeding clinics in addition to the continuing implementation of breastfeeding policies.

Adolescent Pregnancies

WHO recommends for the first pregnancy to be timed to at least 18 years of age or older, as health risks are increased for both mothers and their newborns in early pregnancies. DOH statistics reveal that fetal deaths are more prevalent among young mothers, while babies born to them are likely to have low birth weight, inborn defects, mental problems, have development and learning problems later in life (Perez, 1998 cited in Sobritchea & Batangan, 2003).

In the Philippines, while the need to practice family planning is great, access to reproductive health services is inadequate. This is especially true for adolescents. According to the 2006 FPS, around 6.3 percent of women aged 15-19 have already begun childbearing. Only about one in 10 women in this age group use modern contraceptive methods, compared to one in three among married women of reproductive age (2003 NDHS). When faced with an unwanted pregnancy, adolescents are likely to choose unsafe options to end it.

Since abortion is illegal in the Philippines and whatever safe options available are probably beyond their financial reach, a pregnant teenager will most likely resort to induced abortion. A

survey of pregnancy termination in five regions showed a significant proportion of teenagers who had induced abortion (16.5%) compared While the need to practice family planning is great, access to reproductive health services, especially for adolescents, is inadequate to those who had normal deliveries (11.5%) or spontaneous abortions (6.2%) (Diaz, 1998 cited in Sobritchea, et. al., 2003).

Birth intervals were also found to be short in this age group. To reduce risks of adverse maternal and infant outcomes, the recommended interval is at least 24 months before the next attempt at pregnancy. However, according to the USAID study "Healthy Timing & Spacing of Pregnancy in the Philippines," close to 50 percent of live births to 15 to 19-year-olds are inadequately spaced. The study notes that an infant born after a short interval has increased chances of being born pre-term, having below normal weight at birth, and being small for gestational age. On the other hand, a woman who becomes pregnant too quickly following a previous birth, or induced abortion or miscarriage, faces higher risks of anemia, premature rupture of membranes, abortion, miscarriage and death.

There is a need to improve the quality and delivery of reproductive health services for the youth and to take measures to actively engage both adolescent mothers and fathers in family planning. The DOH-created Adolescent and Youth Health and Development Program is the expanded version of the Adolescent Reproductive Health component of the Reproductive Health program in the Philippines. Through this, adolescent and youth health services are to be integrated into the health delivery systems, empowering the youth by early education and information sharing and providing gender responsive health services.

Another area of concern is the increasing overall prevalence of premarital sexual activity. Premarital sex is on the rise among adolescents, increasing from 18 percent in 1994 to 23 percent in 2002.

In the 2003 NDHS, 0.7 percent of women and 56.6 percent of men aged 15-19 who have never

been married had sex in the past 12 months. Unfortunately, many engage in premarital sex without adequate knowledge of how to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A significant proportion of adolescents engage in risky sexual behavior such as early sex (11.7%), unprotected sex (between 19.2% and 24.5%), or multiple sex partners (34.8%), increasing their vulnerability to STIs and early pregnancy. Three percent of the male respondents in the 2003 NDHS reported that they had two or more partners and 0.6 percent admitted to have had paid for sex. Only 18.6 percent of this group used a condom the first time they ever had intercourse.

In 2002, the prevalence of STIs was highest among the 18-24 age group. Self-reporting of STIs and/or symptoms of genital discharge, sores or ulcers remains low at around 8 percent (2003 NDHS). There may be a need to pay closer attention to adolescents in terms of education and delivery of reproductive health services, given the rising figures of teenagers engaging in premarital sexual activity. Efforts to educate the youth on reproductive health may be coursed through the academic community using a simple, age-appropriate, yet comprehensive curriculum.

But there may be a greater need to target adolescents not being formally schooled, as the 2003 NDHS showed that more than 40 percent of young mothers only received primary education. This group will largely benefit from fieldwork visits and distribution of IEC materials. The same survey revealed that only 5.9 percent of women aged 15-19 who were not using contraception were visited by a field worker to discuss family planning. Properly trained health workers may be tapped to deliver this service to their communities.

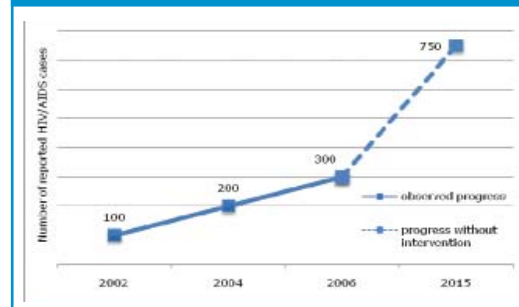
The survey also showed that less than two-thirds of respondents from the 15-19 age group heard a family planning message in the past month on the radio (51.0%) or television (61.3%), or read it in a newspaper/magazine (34.7%), poster (31.2%) or pamphlet (21.9%). There is much room for improvement in this area, where great gains may be obtained at a relatively low cost. Counseling

on sexuality, STIs and responsible sexual behavior during adolescence may also affect their decisions as they become young adults.

HIV/AIDS

There has been a total of 3,061 reported HIV Antibody seropositive and AIDS cases from 1984 to 2007, with 1.5 percent of the reported cases being of children below 10 years of age. Figure 14 shows the increasing number of reported HIV/AIDS cases noted by DOH in the past few years. Despite the rising number of reported cases, the prevalence rate remains below one percent of the population, which is well within our national target.

Figure 14. Number of reported HIV/AIDS cases, 2002-2015



However, the 4th Medium Term Plan on HIV/AIDS 2005-2010 sees that the trend is pointing to a hidden and growing epidemic in the country. Furthermore, the projected number of cases by 2015 may rise to 750, if left unchecked. It may also be important to consider that cases may be underreported, possibly due to the ill repute associated with disclosing such a condition in a conservative Catholic population.

Sexual transmission is still considered as the main cause of HIV infection. Needle sharing by IV drug users is also a significant cause in spreading HIV. Though the level of awareness regarding HIV/AIDS is low across the age groups, UNAIDS' UN Support Plan 2005-2006 notes that this is particularly true among the youth. According to the 2003 NDHS, although 93 percent of the respondents from the 15-19 age group have heard of AIDS,

their awareness of the value of maintaining a monogamous relationship with one uninfected partner or using condoms to reduce the risk of transmission is low.

Integrating HIV prevention into education and conducting behavior intervention activities as early as adolescence may bring about positive changes later on in life. We may also need to look into alternative ways of raising awareness in the youth and engaging them in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In 2005, for example, UNICEF formally launched the Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS campaign in the country during an eight-hour marathon concert which became an avenue for young people to receive basic information about HIV/AIDS and its transmission and prevention in a manner that entertained them as well.

However, such campaigns may not be reaching some of the groups that are in need of being alerted to the perils of HIV/AIDS. In the 2003 NDHS, only 53 percent of the respondents aged 15-19 years old answered positively upon being asked if they had known at least one source of male condoms. Between various groups, this knowledge is more widespread in urban areas and richer families, as shown in Table 6. In addition to this, misconceptions like transmission through mosquito bites and supernatural means are still common. In the same survey, only 36 percent of all women and 30 percent of all men did not accept these misconceptions. We should take additional steps towards raising AIDS awareness of adolescents from less privileged groups, especially on the affordability and accessibility of male condoms in their areas.

Table 6. Percentage of females and males aged 15-19 who know at least one source of male condoms, by socioeconomic status and location, 2003

Demographic Groups		Females	Males
Wealth Index Quintile	Lowest	52.9	33.6
	Highest	70.8	76.7
Location	Rural	58.9	49.7
	Urban	67.2	71.4

What Lies Ahead

There are three possible scenarios in the future of our nation's child health care. One may come up by accelerating current improvements, thereby reaching or even surpassing our set targets; another by sustaining current progress, allowing the Philippines to slowly inch towards our goals; and lastly, a scenario that may arise from not fully addressing current matters, both evident and unforeseen.

One of the common denominators which can be observed of indicators from the different stages of the child's development is the need to level performance between various socioeconomic groups, geographic locations and levels of educational attainment. More often than not, poorer families, those living in rural areas, and those whose mothers have not been educated are at a disadvantage. In these groups, mortality rates and the prevalence of preventable diseases are high; children are not immunized and not properly nourished; knowledge on diseases, transmission and means of prevention are not widespread; and health care services are not readily accessible or available.

There seems to be an invisible yet almost tangible line demarcating the rich from the poor, the educated from the uneducated, and those living in the cities from those in the far-flung areas. Stakeholders must be able to recognize the need to decrease the stark disparities and decide to target efforts towards these disadvantaged groups. Investments in health focused on these groups to level performance with the more privileged ones, coupled with sustained or even improved implementation of existing nationwide policies and programs, will probably result in the acceleration of our current progress.

But it may be important to note that continued progress is possible even without thoroughly addressing these disparities. Improvements will probably be slow, as the country performance will be dragged down by those of the underprivileged groups despite sustained attempts to implement and improve policies and programs at the national level.

However, it is also entirely possible that we will be facing greater issues in the near future if the gravity of disaggregation is taken lightly. Rates of development as presented may crawl and, eventually, not progress anymore. Change initiated can never be too late, even at this point, but it may come at a greater expense. By then, we may need to make larger investments and exert stronger efforts just to reach the minimal child survival needs.

We should also take into consideration unforeseen events which may hamper our progress, such as the 2008 food crisis and the current global financial crisis. During these times, we cannot bank on surviving when our health care system is at the brink of collapsing. It is therefore wiser to see danger ahead and take prudent actions now while we still can.

Taking Steps Today

The trends are already telling us the tale of our possible tomorrow. But it is still essential to recognize that child survival strategies will improve if we bridge the gap between health care access and health conditions in the various demographic groups. Some national trends are encouraging us to sustain our current efforts, as in the reduction of infant and child mortality as well as in battling malnutrition.

However, the picture painted by country performance is not fully reflective of what happens in the regional and local levels. In its core still lies the problem, whose weight is carried by the underprivileged. The trends are also warning us to keep a conscious eye on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country; particularly, to our susceptible youth. Most trends, however, are calling out for stronger policies to be formulated and implemented and major program improvements to be made.

Some of the areas essential to maintain, sustain and increase coverage of basic child health services are as follows:

- Strengthening support of government, non-governmental and private sectors to existing and future child health programs
- Firming up technical, financial and manpower resources at the community level
- Addressing the exodus and poor distribution of health personnel through strategic policy solutions in health human resource development
- Increasing demand for and utilization of services by improving health-seeking behavior through knowledge dissemination and education
- Testing out and gathering evidence on best practices of service delivery through monitoring and evaluation strategies and child health management information systems

This report recommends the following specific measures to be taken:

- Ensure access to family planning services and quality antenatal care
- Fully implement the EmOC approach
- Formulate policy, plans and programs addressing infant mortality, specifically, the major causes of perinatal and neonatal mortalities
- Review and improve the National Control of ARI Program and National Control of Diarrheal Disease Program
- Increase coverage of the Expanded Program on Immunization by adjusting the frequency of designated immunization days in far-flung areas

- Extend coverage of the Food for School Program to more areas and sustain efforts in various food fortification programs
- Continue initiatives promoting breastfeeding and create more ingenious projects involving the community
- Assess and strengthen implementation of components of the Adolescent and Youth Health and Development Program
- Provide alternative means raising HIV/AIDS awareness in the youth

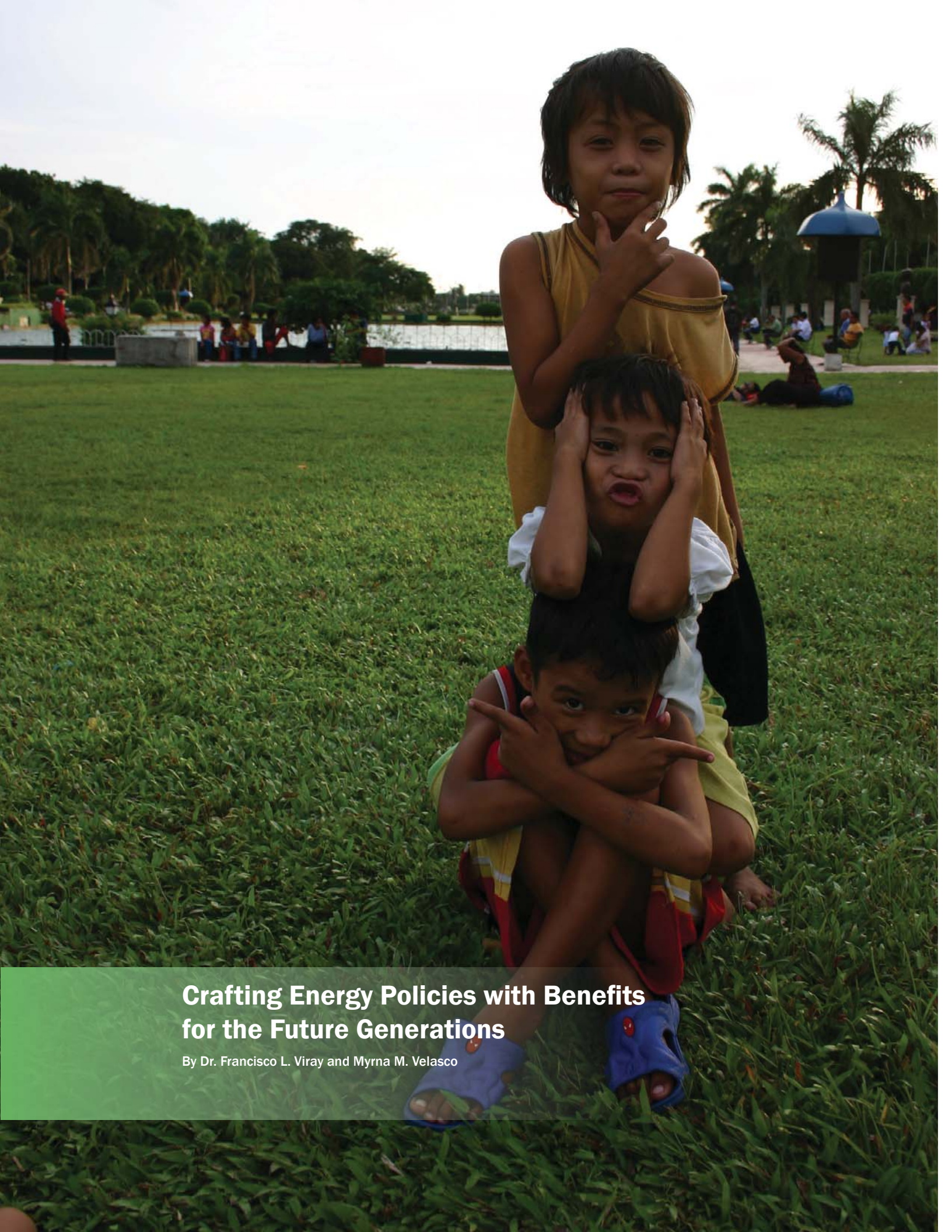
Ensuring quality delivery of health services in a cost-effective and sustainable manner will require adequate financing. Without sufficient funding, identification of interventions for programs to be at their efficient and effective best will remain on paper.

In the past decade and a half, the principal source for financing health in the Philippines has significantly remained as out-of-pocket spending

(47.7% in 1991 and 47% in 2004, as recorded by the Philippine National Health Accounts). However, Social Health Insurance has increased, though not dramatically, from 5.4 percent in 1991 to around 10 percent in 2004. Government share, on the other hand, has decreased from 38.5 percent in 1991 to 30 percent in 2004. From the perspective of households, these trends show no immediate relief from the high and escalating cost of medical treatment. At the national and local levels of government, the mindset of health care being an expenditure must be corrected, as it should more properly be viewed as an investment.

In all of these proposed measures to take, focused targeting will need to be at its heart so that the poor, the uneducated and the remote will be catered to. These major improvements will ask for involvement of stakeholders from the different sectors of society. Although our task list appears to be incredibly lengthy, the future of our children's health is still in our hands. We can still make changes today, in hope of shaping tomorrow's environment.





Crafting Energy Policies with Benefits for the Future Generations

By Dr. Francisco L. Viray and Myrna M. Velasco

Introduction

Given indomitable future economic expansion and people's improving lifestyles, energy will continue to be a key component of human existence – ours and the generations after us.

And as the demand for both electricity and fuels will continue to escalate, this country certainly cannot leave its energy future to chance. As history has taught us, and judging by the day's newspaper headlines, the goal toward energy security trails rough patches ahead. Essentially, the problems hobbling the global energy sector do not have simple solutions, and overcoming the challenges will depend on the actions taken today.

Policymakers in fact see it as one of the most significant economic and national security challenges of the 21st century. Things will turn out even more complicated as we integrate into the solution path the intertwined goal of preserving the environment while ensuring reliable and sustainable energy. Specific policy approaches indeed have to be assessed in terms of their effectiveness, scale and required costs of investments.

The Philippines is giving “energy independence” a big push, but practical reality suggests that we cannot totally insulate ourselves from developments in other parts of the world. In an interdependent world, there are policy agendas that have to be addressed on a global scale, such as the risks of climate change; also, there are international market developments that affect us on a level that could equal the experience of even developed countries.

Focus on the Rights of the Child

Children have the right to quality of life that will be driven by economic growth. On these twin issues, energy is a vital and necessary input.

Nevertheless, energy is also pointed to as the culprit of climate change which endangers the world population and, for that matter, the children.

That is in addition to other health strains that some energy resources trigger on human health, predominantly the impact of fossil fuels.

As enshrined under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Millennium Development Goals, it is imperative for the present generation to strategically shape future energy policies that shall address concerns of preserving the environment and balancing it with the need for economic development and ensuring the access of the poorer segments of the population to such basic modern necessity as electricity.

RP's Electricity Access via Electrification Program

- * **The country already achieved 98.03% barangay electrification level**
(41,155 out of 41,980 barangays have been energized)
- * **Registered 80% household connection level**
(Energized 13,849,509 out of 17,361,546)

Source: National Electrification Administration, August 2009.

Experts have opined that crafting the future policies would require examining long-term conditions tied to economic growths and prospective material changes in energy's demand-supply balance that may be brought about by advancements in technology application, development of new supply sources, demographic changes (such as population migration to urban centers) and even political events.

Similarly included in the list of future trends that can drive up energy demand are the increasing use of cyberspace for learning and communication; proliferation of electric toys, gadgets and household appliances; and new waves of explosion in information and communication technologies.

Energy Supply Issues

Energy security has been a major concern in our country. The country has been and will

continuously be vulnerable to the international energy market situation unless our strong dependence on imported sources is addressed. This was illustrated during the oil price shocks in 1973 and 1979, the Iran-Iraq tanker war in 1981-1988 and the Gulf War in 1990. These episodes in the country's history elicited various actions to ensure energy supply in the country. The 1973 crisis accelerated the search for local petroleum and other indigenous energy sources including geothermal, hydro and nuclear systems. The programs increased the domestic energy share to 38 percent in 1987. The most recent global energy crisis, however, takes a different nature.

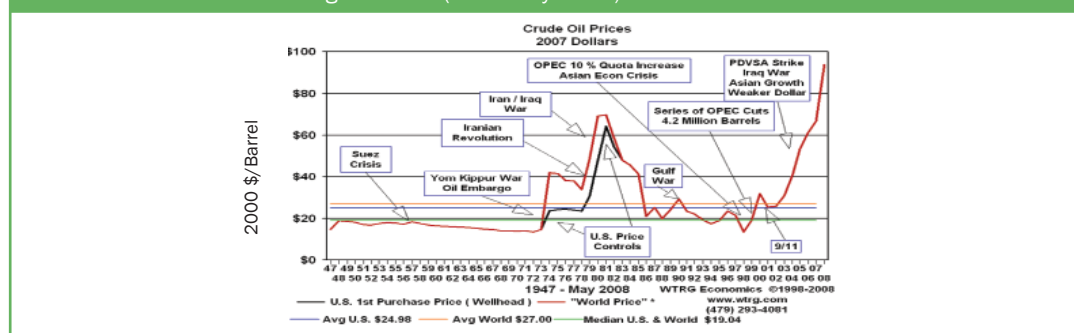
The drastic oil price surge, to a large degree, is attributed to the diminishing levels of fossil fuel reserves in the world. Crude oil prices behave much as any other commodity with wide price swings in times of shortage or oversupply. The crude oil price cycle may extend over several years, responding to changes in demand as well as OPEC and non-OPEC supply and world events. Despite escalating oil prices, petroleum products will remain a dominant fuel.

Industry experts and analysts explain that the next high-priced energy regime will be driven by factors that include: population explosion (from 3 billion to 9 billion until 2050) and higher spending capacities of the next generation, consequently driving up demand; shift in economic growths with developing countries like China leading the charge; the declining output of producing oil fields; and the intensifying bid for companies to employ clean technology in energy projects to address the worsening climate change challenge.¹

After the oil shock of the seventies, the next round of "super spike" in prices was observed in July 2008 when costs of global crude hit through the roof at \$147 per barrel. Experts started setting off projections of the "peak oil era," but the situation shifted course after the global economy collapsed because of the financial crisis that thumped developed countries, primarily the United States and the Eurozone areas.

The low-price transition being experienced at present shall not close the books, experts say, noting forecasts that "there will be another side to the 2008 oil price collapse."

Illustration 1. Factors Affecting Oil Prices (1947-May 2008)



Source: WTRG Economics, Oil Price History and Economics (<http://www.wtrg.com/prices.htm>)

Figure 1. Crude Oil Prices (US\$ per barrel) – Prices Turn the Corner Twice

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Q1	45.38	98.31	61.94	65.45	51.78	34.96	33.80
Q2	57.54	126.94	66.77	72.35	52.79	38.12	28.90
Q3	66.34*	113.53	77.93	69.26	65.24	45.14	30.22
Q4	71.67*	55.63	93.12	60.95	59.40	48.10	31.31
Yearly Average	60.32*	98.53	75.03	67.00	57.34	41.61	31.05

*Forecast

Note: Weighted by calendar days

Source: Energy Intelligence Research, June 2009.

Simulations provided by the New York-based Energy Intelligence Research indicated that after the price drops in the first quarter of 2009, oil prices will be on continued up-ticks this year until 2010. The ten-year outlook (2009 to 2018) is even more dismal, albeit prescriptive. Prices are seen surging past \$200 per barrel in a high-case scenario, and way above \$115 per barrel under a low-case scenario. The base case is seen at \$165-\$170 per barrel range within the forecast period.

Onward to 2030, the projection is that global primary energy consumption will be growing by 1.6 percent per annum, or an equivalent of 45 percent rise in the next 20 years. Transportation and commercial sectors are expected to log highest demand growths; while energy consumption of industrial and residential segments will be expanding at a slower pace.

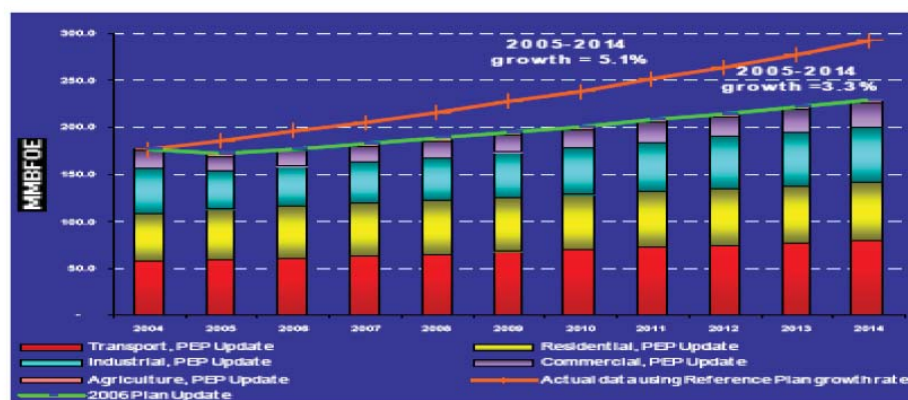
Nevertheless, caution has been raised over a lingering disconnect between “low-demand” and the need to plan new investments to meet future demand expansion. Referencing back to the low

prices prevailing during “weak demand period” of the 1980s and early 1990s that resulted in market oversupply (abundant spare capacity), supply-demand balance was jolted when oil demand suddenly jacked up because of unprecedented strong economic growths and the markets just relied heavily on that spare capacity.

A mismatch developed between demand and supply growth, when China and India began to drive a new period of global economic growth. Such energy planning distortion became apparent in the early to mid-2000s, when spare capacity was exhausted and demand began to outstrip supply, hence, resulting in surging oil prices. (Marican, 2009)²

Will a repeat of all-time high prices anywhere hit us again? The market still has a leeway to manage inexorable price volatilities, experts say, – but first, the strategy must be established as to understanding and sorting out concerns that shall concretely define energy security goals.

Illustration 2. Philippine Energy Demand Projections by Sector (DOE, 2007)



Source: Philippine Energy and Environment: Research and Development Report (Viray, Acosta, Culaba, La Viña, Puno and Zabaleta, 2009).

Figure 2. Historical Oil Industry Demand-Philippine Setting

All Products (Total) Net of Diesel/ IFO for Power	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
MB	96,685	99,508	93,813	101,088	105,944	106,214	106,406	104,497	107,412
MBCD	264.9	272.6	257.0	277.0	290.3	291.0	291.5	286.3	294.3

Source: Philippine Institute of Petroleum, 2008

Conflicts in Energy Planning: The Philippine Setting

Energy industry stakeholders have been putting forward a call on government to play its card well in the policy domain – and when feasible, it should avoid falling into the trap of short-sighted and populist-oriented solutions.

The Philippines – being one of the countries in the world with the chunk of its population living below the poverty line – has remained conflict-ridden as to its energy policy approaches.

While some policymakers recognize the intent and soundness of efficient and long-term planning, leadership oftentimes backs down to populist agendas especially when emotions run high because of high electricity or oil prices.

Conversely, what they have been failing to realize is that investments to ensure the country's path to energy security will not flow when governments cannot ensure stable fiscal and regulatory regimes for investors.

We have already been hit once by a severe power crisis – the massive blackouts experienced in the 1990s that wiped out most of our gains, especially in the economic front.

The Philippine Energy Plan (PEP) of the Department of Energy (DOE) is prescriptive of a possible strike

of a new round of power interruptions in the next three to four years if capacity additions are not set in place as they are needed.

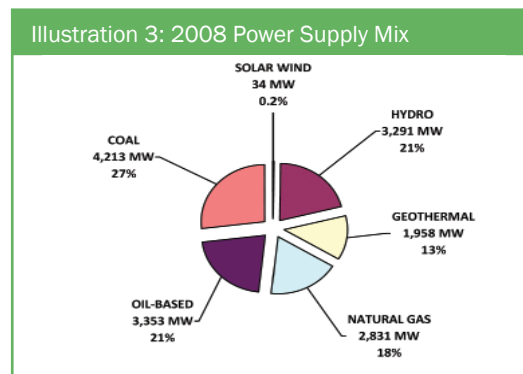
Given the long gestation period for power plant projects (mostly stretching three to five years), energy planners have been cautioned against further flip-flopping in policy crafting. If the country's energy planners are serious in averting any new round of power crisis, they would already need to work fast on cornering those much-needed investments.

Several areas in the Visayas, primarily within the Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) grid, are already suffering from the scourge of rotating power outages. The Mindanao grid is similarly confronting a precarious situation as to its near-term power requirements. When capital flows for greenfield (new) power projects are not addressed quickly by investors, it will not take long before the Mindanao grid to be similarly afflicted with brownouts.³

According to the DOE, the critical period for the Luzon grid to have on stream additional capacity will be pushed back to year 2013.⁴ Until 2014, the aggregate capacity addition expected on line would be 2,290 megawatts.

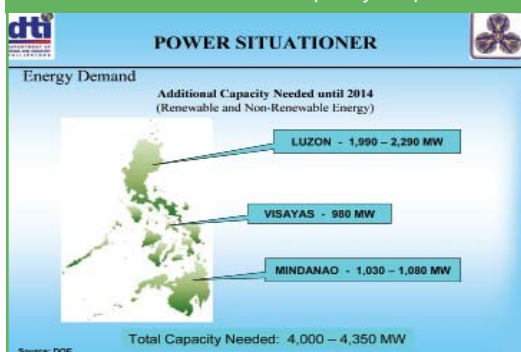
Generally for Visayas, the most critical period is 2011, save for the areas already short of capacity. The region will need to boost its capacity by 980MW until 2014, according to the updated Philippine Energy Plan (2007-2014). Expected capacities to be on-line starting 2011 are the 200-MW coal plant expansion of the Naga facility in Cebu of the Salcon-Korea Electric Power Corporation consortium, as well as the 246MW power project of Global Business Power Corporation of the Metrobank group.

Mindanao is still relatively safe when it comes to additional capacity requirement, except under drought conditions because the grid still relies predominantly on hydro. By 2014, the aggregate capacity addition logged in DOE's plan is 1,080MW.



Source: DOE-Power Development Plan

Illustration 4. Future Power Capacity Requirements



Source: Presentation of Director Nestor P. Arcansalin, Board of Investments (Powertech Forum, September 2009)

Demystifying Risks and Strategies in Deregulation Policies

The vision of instituting deregulation policies, both in the oil and electricity sectors, is stimulated by prospects of introducing competition in the marketplace – which in turn will result in lower prices. It also sets a policy framework that would be able to expand choices for consumers.

In the same vein, privatization as a strategy will free up the government of a huge financial burden in putting up much-needed energy infrastructures to underpin the country's economic long-term economic growth.

The move to deregulate the industry, in particular, was anchored chiefly on the goal to dismantle the 70-year-old monopoly of the state-run National Power Corporation, consequently widening the base of competition in the industry.

For ordinary electricity consumers, deregulation has raised expectations on potential reduction in power rates. Nevertheless, this remains an unfulfilled goal as premised on benefits purportedly promised by the framers and advocates of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA). The subsequent milestone being watched closely will be the effectiveness of implementation of open access – or the regime that will finally allow

consumers to choose their preferred electricity suppliers. Done efficiently, industry players say, the open access regime will be the ultimate key to cheaper electricity rates for the country. On the flip side, it is believed that the demand-supply gap will likewise be temporarily plugged with the planned efficiency upgrades being undertaken by the buyers of the privatized NPC plants. According to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM), this will shore up available capacity in the Luzon grid by 14 percent and will likely stretch supply and defer investments for greenfield capacities by at least a year.

And when additional capacity is finally needed in the three major grids, these same private investors will take the cudgels of capital infusion for new power projects.

Since government, or NPC for that matter, can no longer enter into power supply contracts based on the provisions of the EPIRA, the options left for power investors would be to directly negotiate off-take agreements (bilateral supply contracts) with distribution utilities and other end users for their acquired facilities or new projects. However, credit risk concerns are being raised on electric cooperatives as potential off-takers, because most of them are rated not financially-capable to underwrite power supply agreements. Big distribution utilities like the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) also experience financial dilemmas from time-to-time due to regulatory lag predicaments (i.e., delays in their cost recoveries).

Investors are taking on their investment plans very cautiously because of issues on market risks. The key question begging an answer is: what are the available markets for investors in power?

There are also lingering concerns as to when true competition will thrive in the deregulated power industry – either through the envisioned open access regime or at trading at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

Figure 3: Summary of NPC Power Generation Assets Sold/Auctioned					
Power Plant	Rated Capacity (MW)	Date of Bidding	Winning Bid Price(US\$M)	Winning Bidder	Status
Talomo Hydro (Mindanao)	3.5	March 25, 2004	1.37	HEDCOR	Turned Over to Buyer
Agusan Hydro (Mindanao)	1.6	June 4, 2004	1.528	First Gen	
Barit Hydro (Luzon)	1.8	June 25, 2004	0.48	Atty. Ramon Constancio	Turned Over
Cawayan Hydro (Luzon)	0.4	September 30, 2004	0.41	SORECO II	Turned Over
Loboc Hydro (Visayas)	1.2	November 10, 2004	1.42	Sta. Clara Int'l.	Turned Over
Pantabangan-Masiway Hydro (Luzon)	112	September 7, 2006	129.0	First Gen Hydropower	Turned Over
Magat Hydro (Luzon)	360	December 14, 2006	530.0	SN Aboitiz Power	Turned Over
Masinloc Coal (Luzon)	600	July 26, 2007	930	AES Power Company	Turned Over
Ambukalo-Binga Hydro (Luzon)	175	November 2008, 2007	325.0	(Masinloc Power Partners Co. Ltd.) – American firm	Turned Over
			446.88	SN Aboitiz Power (SN Power is Norwegian firm)	Turned Over
Tiwi-MakBan Geothermal (Luzon)	747	July 30, 2008	5.858	AP Renewables Inc. (Aboitiz Group)	Turned Over
Panay-Bohol Diesel (Visayas)	168	November 12, 2008	0.230	SPC Power Corporation (Salcon-Kepeco joint venture)	Turned Over
Amlan Hydro (Visayas)	0.8	December 10, 2008	\$361.7	ICS Renewables Inc.	Turned Over
Calaca Coal (Luzon)	600	April 2010	\$13.5	Re-bidding won by DMCI Holdings of the Consunji Group *Previous winning bidder Suez Energy Asia (French-Belgian firm) backed out from the transaction	Turned Over *For financial closing
Limay Thermal (Luzon)	620	May 2010		San Miguel Energy Corporation	*For financial closing

*Level of privatization (based on plants turned over and bid out) – 81% (total: 3,778.23MW)

Other Privatization Milestones

- * Turnover of TransCo concession contract to National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), joint venture of local firm Monte Oro Grid Resources Corporation and State Grid of China, on January 15, 2009. (This realized \$3.95 billion in government revenues from the 25-year concession contract.)
- * Successful bidding for the appointment of Independent Power Producer Administrators (IPPAs) for the Sual and Pagbilao coal-fired plants to San Miguel Energy Corporation and Therma Luzon Inc. of the Aboitiz Group, respectively. (The privatization of NPC contracts via IPPA engagements is among the legal requirements for the introduction of open access in the deregulated power industry.)
- * Simultaneous privatization efforts are undertaken for the provision of power supply in NPC's Small Power Utilities Group (NPC-SPUG) or those serving off-grid remote areas.

Source: PSALM, 2009

Oil and Its Discontents

The dilemmas of power sector stakeholders on politicized investment policies are similarly shared by investors in the oil industry which entered the market upon its deregulation in 1998.

Despite continuous capital flow in the downstream oil sector, troubles often jolt the industry especially when pump prices trail uphill climbs. Over the past 10 years, approximately P35-billion-worth of investments have already been coughed up by private investors in the sector.⁵

As proven time and again, investors are often willing to accept some risks on their investments – but that is premised on the fact that they shall be assured of prudent and stable policies. Sometimes, they feel that it might even be better to wait for a crisis situation since that gives them a better

“bargaining position” with the host governments as to their preferred contract terms. The slowdown, however, is always higher costs to be paid by consumers.

Consumer discontent has been fed wildly by historic highs in pump prices that reigned for the most part in 2008. Like the “oil shock” of the 1980s that principally triggered global economic recession then, the drastically-surging oil prices surfaced once again this decade in the equation.

The spikes in oil prices have radical economic implications because of their spiraling impact on food prices, transportation and manufacturing costs, wages and a flurry of other economic activities.

Figure 4. Investments in the Deregulated Downstream Oil Industry

Activity	No. of Players in Operation	Investments (in Billion Pesos)
Liquid Fuel Bulk Marketing	115	13.24
Fuel Retail Marketing (including auto-LPG)*	741	7.44
LPG Bulk Marketing	10	7.38
Terminalling	5	4.58
Bunkering	20	2.53
Total	891	35.18

*Includes 226 independent gas stations

Source: Oil Industry Management Bureau, Department of Energy

Notwithstanding the current global economic slump, the general projection is that supply-demand balance in oil markets may remain unpredictable in the future – partly due to sluggish supply responses from oil-producing countries, declining inventories and spare capacity, and the recurrent strike of geopolitical factors, such as extreme swings in weather conditions and terrorists/militants’ assault on oil-producing regions.

The phenomenon of volatile petroleum prices is not unique to the Philippines though. Globally, even the world’s “super powers,” like the United States, are not shielded from the impact of price volatilities.

Shifting Geography

The energy picture of the future, experts concur, will be marked by geographical shifts both in supply flow and demand growth.

Conventional crude supply from the North Sea and North America will peter out; hence, a shift in supply points will lean toward the Middle East Gulf, Russian Far East, East Africa (Red Sea) and Australasia (for liquefied natural gas). Demand growth, on the other hand, will swing to developing countries, primarily South Asia and East Asia wherein China may remain a growth driver (Knapp, 2009).⁶ The Atlantic Basin and East of Suez, nevertheless, will remain as major crude oil markets for some time.

Consolidation in the roles of international oil companies (IOCs) and national oil companies (NOCs) is similarly anticipated. “IOCs are also losing shares to NOCs, but won’t disappear,” studies have indicated.

The perceived increasing nervousness of oil-producing countries, including the powerful Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), due to the relentless strike of geopolitical factors is likewise expected to stir up relentless questions over supply security. For instance, current developments making the market fidgety now include assaults on oil installations at the Niger Delta region, the North Korea nuclear enrichment concern, and the Iraq-Afghanistan and Israel-Palestine conflicts.

To ease the impact of the country’s heavy dependence on imported oil, the DOE is making an aggressive push on investments for indigenous oil and gas exploration, but efforts in this sphere are still fledgling. Big discoveries that would match the potential of the \$4.5 billion Malampaya deep water-to-gas power project are what the country needs at this point.

Biofuels and other alternatives are also tucked into the country’s energy agenda, but as the policy is being tugged into the “food-versus-fuel debate,” it has been proposed that such option may require closer examination.

The interlinked factors to biofuels are the recent increases in food prices and at times supply shortages that have sparked off food riots in various parts of the world. For the other alternatives in the transport sector, such as compressed natural gas (CNG), hybrid vehicles, fuel cells or hydrogen, the limiting factors range from lack of infrastructure to high investment costs and weak policy support.

Resolving the Issue of Power Rates

There is a never-ending debate precipitated by industrial and commercial end users’ relentless complaint over expensive electricity rates in the country – it being one of the highest in Asia. On the other side of the fence, investors in the power sector claim that power prices remain artificially low because of some remaining subsidies embedded in the rates.

Many believe this is an important concern to be resolved, so investors and consumers would get a clearer picture of how the energy sector would take shape in the future.

The expensive electricity rates in the Philippines has been viewed as the biggest source of “unattractiveness” to foreign and local investments, primarily for power-intensive industries such as the semiconductor and electronics sectors, which are the backbone of the country’s exports.

A technical paper on “Electricity Pricing and Tax Policy: The Supply-Side Perspective” written by University of the Philippines Professor Dante B. Canlas⁷ stipulated that if the country would want to gain back its competitive advantage as investment destination in Asia, “it is important to address the biggest source of its uncompetitiveness — the high electric power costs.”

The Philippines is unfortunately at the bottom spectrum in terms of competitiveness, as culled from the 2007 Report on Global Competitiveness Ranking. Its 71st rank was way too low as compared to its neighbors in the Asean region –

Figure 5: Investment Requirement for Oil/Gas Exploration and Production and Alternative Fuels
(in billion pesos)

Sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Oil and Gas (E&P)	42.04	57.84	57.11	56.31	52.05	46.94
*Biodiesel	1.30 *(carry over from 2008)					0.65
Bioethanol	7.56		9.45			1.89
CNG	0.58	1.34	3.14	2.24	2.24	4.48

Source: Department of Energy, August 2009.

Note: The investment on biodiesel does not include yet those being poured in by government for the development of jatropha as feedstock for biodiesel production.

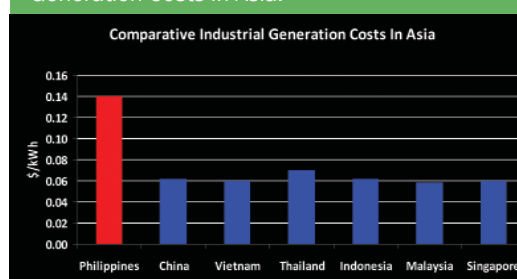
with Singapore in the 7th spot, Malaysia in 21st place and Thailand at 28th place. Even those deemed as its closest rival countries – Indonesia and Vietnam – fared better at 54th and 68th rankings, respectively.

The emphasis on power rate reduction efforts has been proposed to be with the export-oriented manufacturing businesses because of their multiplier effect on the economy – given their quantified input into the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth and to the government's revenue collection. That would be in addition to their contribution to job generation and knowledge transfer.

The other critical concern, as raised by power investors, would be to reflect "true cost of electricity." Over the years, the politically palliative approach of government in bringing down power rates by introducing various forms of subsidies was commonly observed. This led to distortion in pricing signals and market forces, which in the end drive consumers and taxpayers to eventually carry the costs of these subsidies.

The EPIRA prescribes various regulatory and institutional reforms that will eventually lead the industry into resolving the issue of power rates. Firstly, investors must seek long-term bilateral contracts for their generated capacities so they will not unduly expose electricity consumers to price volatilities in the electricity spot market. Secondly, true competition must exist so "price wars" may also evolve once the industry reaches an open access era.

Illustration 5. Comparative Industrial Generation Costs in Asia.



Source: Electricity Pricing and Tax Policy: A Supply-Side Perspective, (Canlas, Technical Report, March 2008).

"One way to help our industries compete globally is to allow them to choose their source of electricity. By allowing open access, large industrial consumers can avail of competitive rates," President Arroyo declared when she laid down policy direction for open access at the Philippine Energy Summit in February 2008.

Figure 6: 2009 Adjustment in NPC's Basic Generation Rate

Grid	Previous	ERC-Approved	Increase/kWh
Luzon	P3.8966	P4.3648	P0.4682
Visayas	P2.8879	P4.0339	P1.1460
Mindanao	P2.1030	P2.8177	P0.7147

Figure 7: Percentage of Rate Components Charged to Customers*

Rate Components	Percentage Share
Generation	57.3
Transmission	12.7
System Loss	7.8
Distribution Charges**	12.5
Taxes and subsidies***	9.7

*Based on 2008 Average Electricity Rate charged by Meralco

**Distribution charges include retail customer charge, metering system charge and supply charge

***Taxes include Value Added Tax (VAT) and franchise taxes; while subsidies and other charges include Lifeline Subsidy Rates and Universal Charges

(By definition, universal charges are those costs passed on to consumers that account for environmental fund, missionary electrification, and stranded contract costs relating to unused capacity from IPP contracts and the NPC's debts.)

Project Costs and Technology Options

Apart from the long-standing dilemma of prospective off-takers (buyers) on their planned capacity, project sponsors of power plants may also be saddled with significant increases in construction and labor costs.

For various technologies that could be utilized for power plant projects, international studies showed that installation and construction costs alone have gone up between 65 percent to 95 percent in 2005 and 2006 from their 2000 cost levels. While the economic crisis momentarily pulled capital costs down, the high-priced regime is seen to recur once the scramble for new projects mounts as the global economy recovers.

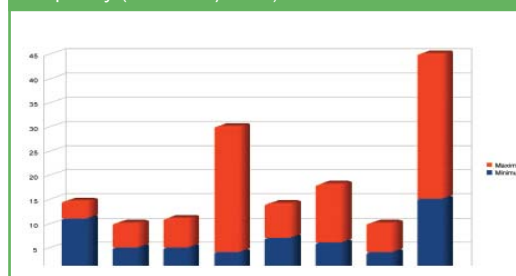
A study done by the US consulting firm The Brattle Group indicated that the recent increases in construction costs of utility infrastructure (such as power plants, transmission lines and power distribution facilities) may “translate to higher rates that consumers might face as a result of required infrastructure investment.”

The steep increases in the prices of raw materials, primarily steel and cement, in turn triggered recent increases in construction costs for power projects.

“These costs increases have primarily been due to high global demand for commodities and manufactured goods, higher production and transportation costs (in part owing to high fuel prices),” the study noted. For instance, the cost of building coal-fired plants in the Philippines was reported rising to a range of \$1.6 million to \$2.0 million/MW from previous estimates of \$1.0 million/MW.

Dramatic upward adjustments in the cost of construction and installation were similarly noted in natural gas-fired power and nuclear power projects; while the cost of building wind power facilities have risen from \$1,150/kW to a range of \$1,300 to \$1,700/kW, as reported in some countries.

Illustration 6: Comparative Costs for Power Capacity (US cents/kWh)



Source: Luis Miguel Aboitiz, Presentation at Powertech Forum (September 2009).

As stated, technology will in the same way occupy a critical spot in future energy planning – especially with forecasts that traditional energy sources such as coal and oil will remain “king” in the energy mix. The downside is that these two fossil fuel sources also emit the bulk of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions polluting the world.

Nonetheless, policy planners are putting their bets on technological solutions to bring down CO2 emissions from fossil fuel power facilities.

In developed countries, like the United States and Europe, experiments are being carried out for the carbon capture and storage (CCS) and the integrated gasification and combined cycle (IGCC) technologies. Although it may take more years before these could be proven to be viable for applications on commercial scale, the high costs of these technologies similarly serve as deterrent.

The other option being considered by resource planners would be nuclear power projects, especially for the long-term energy needs of the country. Like coal, though, there are serious issues to be addressed in taking the “nuclear renaissance” option – chiefly on operational safety concerns, waste management and recycling of spent fuel, and most especially public acceptance, among others.

Cheap vs Clean

At the core of all the options being offered on the table, policy debates are treading next into the question of what consumers would prefer – cheap or clean energy?

As expensive electricity remains high among the issues that bother Filipino consumers, in the “cheap versus clean debate,” it is seen that cheap, to be represented by coal, will likely dominate the country’s power mix in the short term.

In fact, most of the power projects being planned and firmed up by private sector sponsors are coal-fired. What project sponsors have been offering as saving grace for the environment for these type of facilities are the utilization of more advanced clean coal technologies which have higher efficiencies, such as the fluidized coal bed type.

Bridging strategies, such as carbon sinks via reforestation projects and even energy-efficiency initiatives, are also being pursued largely to help balance out carbon emissions from power facilities.

Government Initiatives on Energy Efficiency and Conservation

- Efficient lighting initiatives (including switch to compact fluorescent lamps from incandescent bulbs)
- Efficiency initiatives in buildings and industries
- Establishment of super-ESCOs (Energy Services Companies)
- Promotion of demand-side management
- Advocating passage of the Energy Conservation Bill

Environmental Impact of Energy Use

Energy security efforts come in the light of ensuring a cleaner environment. Data indicates that mean atmospheric temperature in the country is rising, which could be traced to global warming. This trend is expected to continue unless global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are realized. The planned increase in coal power share could increase the country’s greenhouse gas emissions if not properly planned and managed. The country’s vehicle reference standards continue to be lax compared with other countries, slowing down the diffusion of cleaner vehicle technologies. It is encouraging to note, however, that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to upgrade these standards in the near future.

In addition to global warming, energy production and transport are the leading causes of atmospheric acidity. Acidification impact concerns have increased in recent years such that plans are now being explored to set up internationally a sulfur trading program in addition to carbon trading (Klaassen, 1995).

Emissions from power generation and transport are major health concerns, accounting for majority of particulate matter, volatile organic compounds and carbon monoxide emissions. It could be noted that a number of leading causes of death in the country are strongly linked with air pollution like malaria, dengue and cholera.

These global and local environmental concerns would have to take center stage in the country's energy security program and plan.

Climate Change

The bigger problem inherently connected to the energy sector is climate change – a phenomenon which is also largely blamed for most of the natural disasters plaguing the world today.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned early on that the world only has 15 years to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius (2°C).

Experts and policy planners agree that a comprehensive global agreement must be reached to accelerate efforts at bucking the odds of environmental degradation.

Some have opined that to bring about a transition from the old fossil-fuel based economy to a modern, low-carbon society would need increasing utilization of renewable energy sources and promoting initiatives for embracing energy-efficient lifestyles (such as replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps or patronizing energy-saving appliances).

Businesses are likewise encouraged to undertake retrofitting in their buildings or adhere to energy-saving practices that can help them bring down

electricity consumption and benefit them with savings in utility bills.

A sustainable framework for carbon emissions trading set off by the Kyoto Protocol must also be set in place. By 2012, new trading mechanisms as a follow-through to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) post-Kyoto must be successfully reached by global leaders to spur emission-cutting projects.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), focus on improvements of carbon footprints will be in the Asian region, given its emerging economies led by India and China. But equally important to China's commitment to bring down carbon footprints could be the cooperation that the United States must demonstrate in the forthcoming climate change debates in Copenhagen this December 2009.

Amid all the concerns raised on energy policy formulations, the forbidding call is a shift to cleaner energy sources, primarily leaning to renewable energy development. There's a catch, though. While there are national aspirations for a shift in the energy mix towards cleaner energy sources, particularly towards geothermal, hydro and even some renewables like wind and biomass, the speed of transformation to these alternatives will not be fast.

Figure 8: Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂) Emissions from Energy Use (In million metric tons)							
Fuel Types	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Oil/Oil Products	53.00	54.82	55.14	57.02	58.83	60.51	62.49
Natural Gas	8.16	8.18	10.40	11.77	13.19	14.96	15.88
Coal	26.88	26.97	27.05	27.13	27.21	27.29	27.39
Total	88.04	89.97	92.59	95.91	99.22	102.76	105.77

Source: DOE/DENR

Renewable Energy

Despite the drawbacks, the Philippines evidently wants to get ahead in the policy direction towards accelerating RE development. As the whole world took sweeping bets on cleaner energy, the government with the DOE taking the lead swiftly took its way through the Congressional maze to ensure the passage of the Renewable Energy Act of 2008.

The passage of the RE measure in December was considered the “perfect gateway” to stir up opportunities for RE-based capacity investments. The Philippine government’s thrust of expanding renewable energy development was anchored on goals to enhance the country’s energy independence to 60 percent by 2010, as laid down under the DOE-crafted Philippine Energy Plan.

Renewable energy, also commonly referred to as “green power,” is the electricity that is generated from resources that don’t run out (infinite), or are quickly renewed through natural process. These would include power supply produced from biomass, solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, ocean energy sources and even hybrid systems, as defined under the RE Law.

While all methods of electricity generation practically affect the environment, renewable energy is among the cleanest – having the least over-all environmental impact, according to studies.

Figure 9: Renewable Energy Generation Capacity

RE Resource	2007 Existing Capacity (MW)	2008 Existing Capacity (MW)
Geothermal	2,027	2,027
Hydro	3,367	3,367
Wind	25	33
Solar	5	7
Biomass	21	68
Total	5,445	5,500

Source: DOE, September 2009.

Shoring Up Investment Prospects

From all indications, the government is keen at cornering much-needed investment dollars to help shore up the share of renewable energy in the country’s energy mix. But just when investors were showing waning appetite to invest in the sector, the government offered a package of incentives under the RE Law that is sure to win over their interest.

The policy provides premium incentives, namely: seven-year income tax holiday (ITH) for RE resources that can be categorized as “new investments”; zero-rated value added tax (VAT) for the sale of fuel or power generated from RE sources; duty-free importation of RE machinery, equipment and materials for the first 10 years from the issuance of certification to the RE developer; special realty tax rates on equipment and machinery; and the chance to enjoy a significantly-reduced corporate tax rate of 10 percent on net taxable income after seven years of ITH as compared to the prevailing corporate income tax rate of 35 percent.

To perk up market prospects for renewable energy, the law also provides for Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) – the parameters of which are yet to be drawn by the National Renewable Energy Board (NREB). The RPS would refer to a market-based policy that shall require electricity suppliers (i.e., distribution utilities and power generators) to source or offer an agreed portion of their energy supply from RE eligible sources. The other incentives are: feed-in tariff that shall be fixed for 12 years by the Energy Regulatory Commission; a “must dispatch” for intermittent RE sources (such as wind and hydro); and the net metering system that allows end users who will be installing their own RE systems (i.e., households) to enter into agreements with distribution utilities/suppliers on the sale of their surplus capacities to the grid.

For end-users/consumers, they may opt to avail of the “Green Energy Option” or the mechanism that shall empower them to choose renewable energy in meeting their power requirements, which in turn will entitle them to rebates.

RE's Integration in the Country's Energy Mix

Presently, the most abundant RE sources in the Philippine energy mix are geothermal and hydro, taking 17 percent and 11 percent shares, respectively. DOE forecasts indicate that geothermal and hydro resources will provide for up to 40 percent of the country's power supply over the medium-term (until year 2014).

Many of the existing investors in RE resources are also gearing up for expansion. Yet they claim that they are still apprehensive of potential market risks and how the regulatory environment will eventually take shape.

Despite issues of dislocations, the capital-intensive nature of investments and long-gestation period for hydropower projects, their share in the country's power mix is seen to reach significant level in the coming years. But for the next wave of investments for industrial-scale hydropower facilities, experts qualify that social acceptability would be a central issue. Studies and post-evaluation reports of some hydropower projects in some countries indicate that public resistance will intensify and thrive as a tougher challenge, given incidents of upstream flooding, destruction of agricultural areas and disruption of host communities in some of the completed hydropower projects.

Geothermal investments, on one hand, are hurdled by dilemmas of perceived high investment costs. Investors noted that the set of incentives may not still be attractive enough to offset the level of market and political risks inherently linked to geothermal investments. The upfront capital cost involved in developing geothermal power projects would range from US\$1,150 to US\$3,000 per installed kilowatt (costs vary depending on the size and type of the power plant and the quality of the resource). Yet, this is still comparably higher than a natural gas facility.

On DOE's assessment, the development of these traditional RE-based resources will be done alongside solar (i.e., photovoltaic or PV systems which are mainly targeted for rural electrification),

biomass and wind, which the government also envisions to be undertaken on wide-scale use.

Figure 10: Targeted Additional Renewable Energy Investments (2009-2014)

RE Resource	Megawatt Capacity
Hydro	1,025
Geothermal	580
Wind	557
Biomass	184

Source: DOE, September 2009.

It is likewise believed that wind as a renewable technology option has come of age, but it takes much more to prove its sustainability. The bigger arguments are focused on concerns that wind power projects are not cost-competitive and their reliability is less dependable (intermittent).

Nevertheless, government planners are bent on stimulating investments on wind power farms, as this is part of the overall goal to shift to cleaner fuels and to push the country closer to energy self-sufficiency targets. The first wind power project constructed on commercial scale was the 25-MW Northwind power facility in Bangui, Ilocos Norte. It was commissioned in 2005 and now supplies part of the Luzon grid's requirement

The Philippines, being situated on the fringes of the Asia-Pacific monsoon belt, exhibits a promising potential for wind energy, according to data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) which shows the country as having a mean average of about 31 watts per square meter (W/m²) of wind power density. Such findings were validated by a study conducted in 1999 by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) of the United States, stipulating that the country has good-to-excellent wind resource potential that can yield 70,000 MW of potential installed capacity when fully harnessed.

Beyond the incentives, investors said they also need to assess stability in the political environment, consistency in the application and implementation of the incentive programs, and the host country's respect for contractual obligations.

The Human Factor: Education and Capacity Building for the Future Generation

From the energy policies crafted by our present leaders, a deeper recognition must roll up that the next generations are entitled to grow and live in healthy environments and that their needs are met by a sustainably-growing economy.

Conversely, for our children or grandchildren to make intelligent choices and build upon effective policy approaches, they must first gain knowledge and enhance their appreciation of having a secure energy future.

The young people in particular will be taking over when the current workforce in the energy sector faces retirement in the coming decades. Yet there are challenges that they must overcome today so they will thrive as effective energy planners or policy implementers into the future.

There are no existing quantifiable data as to the young generation's extent of knowledge or awareness of the issues in the energy sector. But their needs are obvious — in terms of incorporating energy-related courses or curriculum in schools and universities, the expansion of related education and training programs, skills improvement and development of innovative capabilities on technology discoveries, and enhancement of research and development activities.

Conclusion

The most immediate need of the sector and for a fresh round of capital inflow for new energy projects would be stable and predictable investment policies and tax regimes. And government must also be willing to reduce barriers to entry that will open up opportunities for development of untapped resources.

The economic crisis ushers in a renewed discipline by companies and policy planners to have “more careful phasing of reserve developments to focus on high-value opportunities based on technical and operational merits.” If an enlightened leadership would provide that path today, chances are high that future solutions will also effectively address the next round of complex challenges that energy and environment may pose in the long term.

Indeed, the importance of energy to future economic development and the well-being of the next generation cannot be sidetracked. The challenge now lies on us to craft policy responses that would ensure the development of energy resources safely, economically and in an environmentally-responsible manner so that future generations can learn from the examples we have set for them to follow or improve upon.

Endnotes

- ¹ The Two-Headed Market for Oil, Energy Intelligence Group, June 8, 2009.
- ² Presentation of Tan Mohd Hassan Marican, Petronas Chief Executive, Oil and Gas Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 8, 2009.
- ³ “Brownout” is a unique term used in the Philippine power industry setting. This was coined by Filipinos at the height of their sufferings from rolling power outages during the 1990s power crisis.
- ⁴ Based on a DOE press statement, September 20, 2009.
- ⁵ Based on the DOE Accomplishment Report, 2008.
- ⁶ David Knapp, Energy Intelligence Group, New York, 2009.
- ⁷ Dr. Canlas also served as former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority.



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Economy, Environment and Filipino Children*

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* This paper draws liberally from the author's research "Economy and Environment in the Philippines: Issues and Imperatives" prepared for the ERIA Sustainable Development Project on Mainstreaming Sustainable Development Policies in East Asia, March 2009.

Introduction

It is often said that the Philippines is a rich country pretending to be poor. Blessed with an exceptionally rich and vast array of natural resources, the Philippines should be among the most affluent countries in the world. But the country, it seems, is yet another illustration of the so-called “natural resource curse”¹: the common phenomenon whereby countries and regions with an abundance of natural resources tend to have worse development outcomes than those that are less endowed.

A richly-endowed archipelagic country of around 7,100 islands, the Philippines arose out of a long history of geological transformation that through time yielded a unique assemblage of bio-physical ecosystems teeming with biological and natural resources.

Its 30 million hectares (300,000 square kilometers) of land area, 70 percent of which were forested just over a century ago, hosts an extremely rich and diverse array of plant and animal species that puts the country among the top mega-diversity countries in the world. Similarly, its 36,289 kilometers of coastline and its abundant inland waters endow it with an extremely rich array of marine and freshwater resources acknowledged to be among the richest and most diverse in the world.

The country reportedly possesses more than 50,000 documented plant and animal species, more than 65 percent of which are found nowhere else on Earth.² Furthermore, more new species are discovered in the country every year than in any other country in the world.

The country’s mineral resources are similarly among the richest in the world. It is considered to be the fifth most mineral-endowed country in the world in terms of minerals per unit land area.

While it does not have the substantial petroleum resources of its Southeast Asian neighbors Indonesia and Malaysia, it is the world’s second largest producer of geothermal power, with its available capacity of 1,900 megawatts supplying 16 percent of the country’s installed electric power generation capacity. Sources of water are likewise abundant, with potential water supplies well beyond the country’s requirements.

With such abundance of natural wealth, the Philippines possesses all the necessary basic elements that should be able to support broad-based industrialization, self-sufficiency, and prosperity.

But rather than harness its superior natural wealth to fuel a dynamic and broad-based economic development over the years, the country has found its economy lagging behind those of most of its neighbors for more than four decades. The relative weakness of the Philippine economy through the years has translated into weak human development and environmental indicators as well. While the economy found new dynamism in the 1990s amid aggressive reforms under President Fidel V. Ramos, the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 cut short what appeared at the time to be a building momentum for growth and development. Subsequent reversals in the quality of politics and governance set the country back once again in its efforts to keep in step with its dynamic East Asian neighbors.

Now nearly a decade since the turn of the new millennium, the country once more faces the challenge of persistently narrow, shallow and hollow economic growth,³ accompanied by worsening poverty,⁴ continued degradation of the environment, and depletion of the nation’s natural resource base. Sustainable development, it seems, remains a distant and elusive goal for this country that would otherwise appear to be well equipped to attain it.

Children and the youth make up the single most important stakeholder group for sustainable development. They are, after all, the successor generation who will inherit the fruits, both good and bad, of whatever actions are taken today in the economic, social, political, environmental and cultural realms. And amidst the current political, economic and social challenges besetting the country, commonly traced to deeply ingrained flaws in Philippine society and the (adult) people comprising it, children and youth are looked upon for hope in a better Filipino nation in the next generation. But unless the development path taken today ensures that the economic, social and environmental welfare of the successor generation is properly considered, even that hope stands on tenuous ground.

This paper examines the economy-environment interaction in the Philippines and its implications for sustainable development, in general, and the welfare and future of Filipino children, in particular. The next section reviews the environmental consequences of the country's economic growth experience. Priority policy issues and thrusts to achieve proper balance among the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development in the country are then highlighted. The paper then describes institutional and other implementation issues that must be dealt with to ensure proper translation of the priority policies and measures into action and achieve their desired impacts. This includes a discussion on the critical role of children in the quest for sustainable development in the Philippine context. The paper ends with a summary and directions for future action.

The Track Record: Economy Impinging on Environment

The World Bank's 2004 Philippine Environmental Monitor (PEM 2004) described the Philippine economy as one that "remains acutely dependent on natural resources." The resource-based industries composed of agriculture, fishery, forestry

and minerals currently employ some 13 million people and are a substantial contributor to national gross domestic product.

While these primary sectors account for about 20 percent of the value of the nation's output, their share in total employment is much larger, at 37 percent. This implies that labor productivity in these primary sectors is low relative to the other major sectors. A direct consequence of this is a much higher incidence of poverty in the rural areas, which account for about 70 percent of all poor Filipinos. In turn, this translates to higher incidence of health and education problems among rural children.

Over the past two decades, and especially in the 1990s, the government undertook aggressive reforms in the form of liberalized trade and investment policies, privatization, and deregulation of key industries including the oil, banking and finance, telecommunications, domestic air transport, and shipping industries.

Economic progress attained in this period, especially in the 1990s, is largely attributed to such competitiveness-enhancing policies and the increased participation of the private sector in the development process, all aimed at building inherent strength in the Philippine economy, as espoused in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan. However, Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21),⁵ the long-term planning document embodying the country's national sustainable development strategy, observed that

....While there is an acceleration in economic growth, there is evidence that environmental quality is fast deteriorating, as dramatized by the increased incidence of environmental disasters such as problems associated with mine tailings, deforestation, pollution, salt-water intrusion and a host of other destructive activities. The regenerative capacities of already fragmented areas in various bio-geographic zones are similarly threatened.

The problem with environmental degradation that has accompanied the economy's growth lies in its close interlinkage with what remains the country's paramount challenge: that of widespread poverty. Based on the 2006 Family Income and Expenditures Survey, one in every three Filipinos (33%) is poor, and 70 percent of the poor live in the rural areas. PA21 continues:

The harm from environmental degradation invariably falls more heavily on the poor. At the same time, poverty drives people into environmentally degrading economic activities, as in the uplands, the coastal fisheries, or small-scale mining. The poverty-environment nexus is thus a critical front in the pursuit of sustainable development, making poverty reduction a critical concern in the country's sustainable development agenda.

Thus, the pattern of economic growth over the years has dealt the country's poor a double blow: narrow, shallow and hollow growth has benefited them little and has left them farther behind; at the same time, the harm from the attendant environmental degradation has fallen more heavily on them as well.

Environmental concerns arising from the country's economic development experience may be grouped into green (biodiversity and forestry-related), blue (coastal and marine resources-related), and brown (solid waste, air and water quality, and mining-related) environmental concerns. Each is discussed in turn below.⁶

The Green Environment: Vanishing Forests

Forest Depletion

The Philippines' forest cover is estimated to have declined from 21 million hectares (or 70%

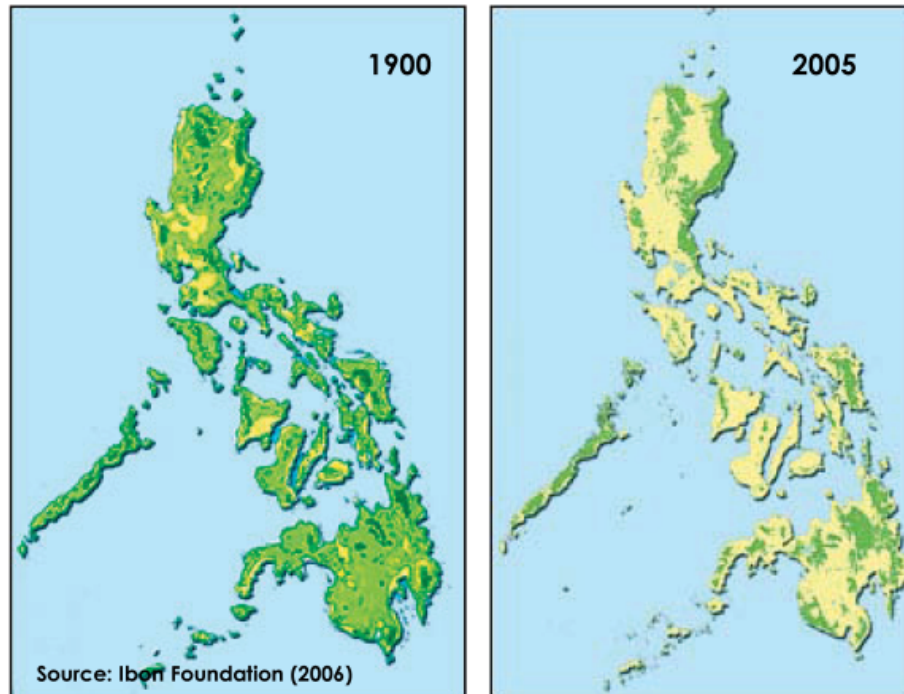
of its total land area) in 1900 to just around 7.2 million hectares (24%) as of 2005, with less than a million hectares left in primary forests. On the other hand, biologists estimate that forests must comprise more than half the land area of the Philippine archipelago for the interrelationships of ecosystems to be sustainable.

With such rapid pace of forest depletion in just over a hundred years, per capita forest cover in the Philippines is now the lowest in Asia (World Bank, 2004), with the remaining primary or intact forests continuously under threat. All this has resulted from land conversions, swidden (slash-and-burn) farming, and illegal logging, apart from destruction due to forest fires and natural causes such as pest infestations and typhoons. Between 1990 and 2005 alone, an estimated 3.2 million hectares of forest cover was lost, and it is estimated that the country continues to lose its forests at the rate of 157,400 hectares or two percent per year.⁷

In the early 1960s, the timber industry was the country's largest foreign exchange earner. From being the world's biggest exporter of tropical hardwoods in the 1970s, the Philippines had turned into a net importer of forest products by the 1990s. It is estimated that the country now imports 60 percent of its wood requirements. At the height of commercial logging operations in the country, there were 420 logging firms which had been given licenses to extract timber from the majority of the forested areas. As a result of unsustainable management and massive deforestation, estimated to have peaked at 300,000 hectares per year in the late 1960s, the industry began to decline in the 1980s. Forestry now accounts for less than one percent of GDP.

Figure 1 is a visual depiction of the dramatic depletion of the country's forest cover through the past century, from 70 percent cover in 1900 to 24 percent as of 2005.

Figure 1. Philippine Forest Cover, 1900 & 2005



Biodiversity Loss

The Philippines is one of the world's 18 "mega-diversity" countries, which together account for 60 to 70 percent of global biodiversity. It has also been identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a biodiversity "hotspot" – that is, a country where biodiversity is subject to extreme threat from deforestation, conversion, fragmentation of natural habitats, unregulated trade, and overall low environmental quality.

Animal diversity is very rich in the country, with over 1,000 species of non-fish vertebrates identified, 48 percent of which are endemic to the country. For mammal species, 64 percent are endemic, while 70 percent are endemic for reptiles, 75 percent of amphibians, and 44 percent of birds. Nearly 200 vertebrate species are now threatened by

extinction. Endemic species such as the Cebu flower pecker, the golden-crowned flying fox, the Philippine cockatoo, the Negros forest frog, and the Philippine eagle are barely surviving in remaining small patches of forest.

Forest destruction has been the single biggest threat to biodiversity in the Philippines. Hunting for trade, trophy or meat, especially of birds, is a major threat to the country's animal biodiversity. Still another threat is the reckless introduction of exotic alien species to the islands. The risks associated with biotic invasions have increased enormously in the past 40 years. Among the most damaging invasive alien species in the Philippines have been the giant catfish, black bass, golden snail, toads including the marine toad, and American bullfrog. Aquatic plants like the water hyacinth and water fern have also had a significant adverse impact on wetland biodiversity.

The Blue Environment: Depleting Fisheries

Water comprises more than four-fifths of Philippine territory, based on the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone covering some 2.2 million square kilometers defined by the government in 1976. The Philippine archipelago lies in the “coral triangle,” the center of the most diverse habitat in the marine tropics. Philippine coral reefs comprise about 26 percent of the total reef area in Southeast Asia and are recognized to be among the richest and most diverse in the world, with about 464 species of hard corals and more than 50 species of soft corals identified.

However, over 30 percent of the coral reefs in the country are considered to be in poor condition. Moreover, there has been a steady decline in the quality of the coral reefs, with only a tiny 0.24 percent reported to be in excellent condition in 2004, against 4.3 percent in 2000 and 5.3 percent in 1991. Ninety-eight percent of these reefs are under medium or high threat.⁸

An estimated 60 percent of the Filipino population of 89 million live within the 832 municipalities lying along the archipelago’s 36,289 kilometers of coastline. Coastal fishing activities account for an estimated 40-60 percent of total fish catch, with the fisheries sector accounting for 4.3 percent of GDP. Exports of fishery products amounted to PhP26 billion in 2002, with the top commodity exports being tuna, shrimp, and seaweed.

The Philippines is also the largest producer of aquaculture products in Southeast Asia, dominated by seaweed production. In 2002, a total production of 3.4 million tons of seafood was recorded, with an average annual rate of production increase of 2.5 percent between 1990 and 2002. The fishing industry provides employment to about one million people (3.3% of the country’s labor force), of which 68 percent is accounted for by the municipal fishing sector, 26 percent by aquaculture, and the remaining 6 percent by commercial fishing.

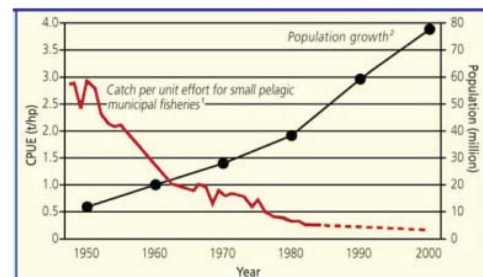
Apart from fish and seafood, coral reefs, mangrove forests, and sea grass beds contribute to the richness, diversity and productivity of coastal and marine resources. These resources also attract tourists, creating local business opportunities and thereby generating further income and employment.

The country’s rich endowment of some of the world’s most unique marine ecosystems has been increasingly threatened by overfishing, pollution, and other human economic activities. Rapid population growth especially in coastal communities has put strong pressure on the country’s coastal fisheries. The average annual fish catch exceeds 2 million metric tons, with nearly half made by municipal and subsistence fishers who operate small boats in shallow coastal waters.

While municipal fisheries dominated the sector in the early 1980s, contributing more than half the national output, its share had gone down to 30 percent by the 1990s. Furthermore, there was an observed slowdown in growth of total production of commercial fisheries, suggesting resource limitations in fish capture and threats on its long-term sustainability. There has been clear evidence that overfishing is occurring in important fishery areas of the country, manifested in increasing effort required per kilogram of fish catch (see Figure 2). This decline of fishery resources in the country appears to be the combined effect of excessive fishing effort, inappropriate exploitation patterns, and coastal environmental degradation.

There has also been massive loss of coastal mangrove forests over the years. Conversion to fishponds, charcoal-making and overharvesting has historically been the cause of the dramatic loss of the primary mangroves in the Philippines. The most rapid decrease occurred during the 1960s and 1970s when the aquaculture industry expanded rapidly in response to strong market demand and supportive government policies.

Figure 2. Declining Fish Catch in the Philippines, 1950-2000



Sources: Dalzell et al (1987) and NSO (2000), cited in <http://www.oneocean.org>.

As of 2004, fishponds were estimated to cover about 289,000 hectares, 80 to 90 percent of which were in areas formerly covered with mangroves. This expansion occurred largely during a period when real prices for fish and shrimp were steadily rising. Between 1980 and 1988, the rate of conversion was still about 8,200 hectares/per year, in spite of a 1980 government ban on further conversion of mangroves to fishponds, and rules mandating the reversion of idle fishponds back to mangroves. Besides fishpond conversions, illegal cutting of mangroves for fuel wood, charcoal-making, and construction have also been major causes of the loss of mangrove forests.

The vast majority (95%) of the remaining mangroves in the country are secondary growth areas. Only five percent are old or primary mangroves, and these are mostly found in the island of Palawan. While there now exists an official policy for mangrove protection, cutting of mangroves remains rampant all over the country.

The Brown Environment: Degraded Soil, Water and Air

Emissions into the atmosphere by both mobile (motor vehicles) and stationary (factories, power plants) sources have rendered the atmosphere hazardous to health in urban centers, especially Metro Manila, apart from contributing to the

worsening climate change problem. Lack of public facilities for both solid waste and wastewater disposal amid growing urban populations has led to pollution and contamination of waterways and groundwater, again to the detriment of public health. Many years of intensive monoculture farming have degraded the quality of the soil in agricultural areas, and massive amounts of topsoil are lost yearly due to erosion from flooding brought by frequent natural disasters and exacerbated by deforestation and destruction of the nation's watersheds.

Alongside industrialization, the mining industry grew rapidly in the 1970s with active government efforts to promote the industry. After declining in the mid-1980s with falling world metal prices, the industry is again being promoted by the government as a major potential source of wealth for the economy in the years ahead. However, there is strong resistance to the policy from oppositors who see mining as a major source of environmental and social problems.

Solid Waste Management and Water Pollution

Solid waste has emerged to be one of the most pressing environmental challenges in the country today. Urban-dwelling Filipinos are estimated to generate an average of 0.5 kg of waste per capita/day, while their rural counterparts generate 0.3 kg.⁹ Metro Manila alone generates one quarter of the total garbage generated annually nationwide. A recent study by the Asian Development Bank estimated that 6,700 MT of waste is generated daily in Metro Manila alone, and annual waste generation is expected to grow 40 percent by 2010. Metro Manila's garbage is currently disposed of in six controlled dumps. However, these sites are expected to reach their capacity within two years. The 1998 National Demographic and Health Survey reported that only 30 percent of Philippine households had access to solid waste collection services at varying frequencies, ranging from twice a week to once every two weeks. More recently, the National Solid Waste Management Commission estimated collection efficiency at 70 percent and 40 percent in urban and rural areas, respectively.

Where residents lack access to solid waste collection, garbage continues to be disposed of indiscriminately or burned. The most common disposal methods are open dumping, burning and throwing into rivers. It is estimated that 145 million liters of used oil is being dumped into rivers yearly.

In 2007, the Marilao River in Bulacan – which is among the sources of drinking and agricultural water supplies for around 250,000 people – was identified by the US-based Blacksmith Institute be among the world’s 30 dirtiest rivers and worst polluted places. Pollution of the river has resulted from years of indiscriminate and continuous waste dumping by tanneries, gold and precious metal refineries, the largest lead smelter in the Philippines, and numerous municipal dumpsites.

Similarly, Laguna de Bay, one of Southeast Asia’s largest freshwater lakes, is projected to become biologically dead within a few years unless rampant pollution due to domestic and industrial waste is arrested. The lake produces about a third of Metro Manila’s supply of milkfish and other edible fish, helps generate electricity, and serves as a key transport route.

Another major reason for degradation of water quality in urban areas has been the indiscriminate disposal of domestic wastewater. Only one percent of the country’s total population is connected to sewer systems (Table 1). Sewerage services outside Metro Manila are almost non-existent, leaving the non-Manila-based urban poor with no access to sewerage services. The common method of household sewage disposal has been through individual septic tanks, where seepage to groundwater sources is common and collected sludge often is indiscriminately disposed of in waterways.

The World Bank estimates the total annual economic loss resulting from water pollution at PhP67 billion (US\$1.3 billion). Included here are PhP3 billion for health costs, PhP17 billion for lost fisheries production, and PhP47 for lost tourism revenues.

Table 1: Sewage Disposal in the Philippines

	Population (millions)	Access to Sanitation Services (%)		
		Sewerage	On-site	None
Metro Manila (MWSS)	13.3	4.0	41.0	55.0
Other Urban and Rural	63.0	0.0	88.0	12.0
National	76.3	1.0	74.0	25.0

Source: Robinson (2003)

Overall, waste generation is increasing rapidly as consumption rises. Meanwhile, collection efficiency is declining as service levels deteriorate due to insufficient and inappropriate equipment and inability to reach households or collection stations. Improvements in recycling, collection, and disposal have become critical imperatives as garbage production continues to increase with population growth and economic development.

Air Pollution

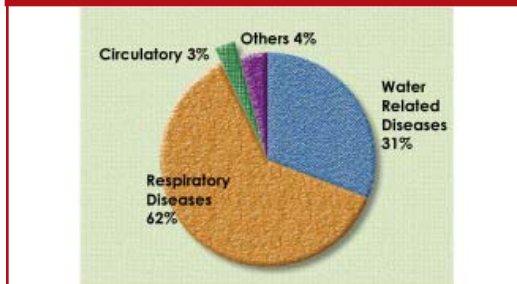
Air pollution is one of the major environmental threats affecting public health in the Philippines. Metro Manila has been ranked by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the five most air-polluted cities in the world. The problem is also felt in most major cities in the country where urbanization has resulted in more factories, rising population density, and increasing vehicle registration.

The largest contributors to air pollution are fossil fuel combustion from industries and vehicle exhaust. Exhaust emissions from buses, jeepneys, utility vehicles, and trucks are estimated to be the largest contributor to urban air pollution and are also recognized carcinogens. Despite a significant drop in ambient lead levels in the last few years because of the phaseout of leaded gasoline, other air pollutants such as particulate matter, sulphur dioxides and total oxidants still tend to exceed safety standards and remain a major concern.

The health costs of particulate matter pollution in the four cities of Metro Manila, Davao, Cebu, and Baguio (representing 28.4% of the total urban population) were estimated to reach more than US\$400 million in 2001. These costs account for 2.5 to 6.1 percent of per capita income in these cities, equivalent to 0.6 percent of the country's GDP. If the rest of the country's population is assumed to be exposed to pollutant levels similar to those in these four cities, a high annual estimate for urban health cost for the country would amount to over US\$1.5 billion.¹⁰

The World Bank estimates that 6,000 Filipinos die each year due to air pollution-related diseases. Children are particularly vulnerable, with 20 percent of deaths among children under five years old accounted for by air pollution. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3. Incidence of Diseases by Type, 1992-2000



Source of Data: Department of Health, National Epidemiology Center

Issues on Mining

The Philippines is naturally endowed with abundant deposits of copper, chromium, gold, and nickel, plus smaller deposits of cadmium, iron, lead, manganese, mercury, molybdenum, and silver. Other industrial minerals present in the country include asbestos, gypsum, limestone, marble, phosphate, salt, and sulphur. The Philippines ranks third worldwide in abundance of gold deposits (and second to South Africa in terms of gold production), fourth in copper deposits (and third in copper production), fifth in nickel deposits, sixth in chromite deposits, and so on.

The richness of the country's mineral resources is well-known to the international mining industry,

and many firms have expressed interest in taking part in tapping the nation's mineral wealth. The controversial Mining Act (R.A. 7942) enacted by Congress in 1995 eased rules for foreign participation in the industry. Meanwhile, small-scale miners, especially those mining for gold, have traditionally operated in certain rich mining grounds, often practicing unsafe and unsustainable mining methods.

The environmental threats from mining include risks of major spillage of mine tailings in the case of medium- to large-scale mining operations, and mercury pollution, soil erosion, sedimentation of water bodies, and non-reclamation of land after mine closure in the case of small artisanal mines. It is estimated that some 131 million metric tons of metallic mine waste and about 136 million metric tons of mine tailings were generated in the Philippines from 1990 to 1999. Table 2 lists the various adverse environmental effects that can arise from different mining processes.

Apart from environmental effects, mining is also commonly associated in the Philippines with the social problem of displacement of indigenous peoples and upland settlers by commercial mining interests.

Economy and the Environment: Achieving Win-Win

Philippine Agenda 21: Broad Thrusts

The challenge facing the country lies in mitigating the above-described problems in the green, blue and brown environment contexts even while attaining ample broad-based and sustained economic growth in order to reduce widespread poverty. This entails an economic strategy that integrates sound environmental management with sound economic management.

Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21) espouses a poverty reduction agenda that seeks to create an enabling economic environment for sustained, broad-based and ecologically-sound growth that improves employment, productivity and incomes and ensures

Table 2. Environmental Damage from Mining Processes

Activity	Potential Effects
Excavation and ore removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destruction of plant and animal habitat, human settlement, and other surface features (surface mining) • Land subsidence (underground mining) • Increased erosion; silting of lakes and streams • Waste generation (overburden) • Acid drainage (if ore or overburden contains sulphur compounds) and metal contamination of lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater
Ore concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste generation (tailings) • Organic chemical contamination (tailings often contain residues of chemicals used in concentrators) • Acid drainage (if ore contains sulphur compounds) and metal contamination of lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater
Smelting and refining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution (sulphur dioxide, arsenic, lead, cadmium, and other toxic substances) • Waste generation (slag)

Source: Ibon Foundation (2006)

food security. In its recently-enhanced form, PA21 identifies five broad goals, namely: (1) poverty reduction, (2) social equity, (3) empowerment and good governance, (4) peace and solidarity, and (5) ecological integrity.

To these ends, PA21 defines a broad strategy that will:

- ensure the **enforcement of or compliance to domestic and international environmental laws** through collaborative efforts of government, business and civil society
- promote the wider adoption of **ecosystems and communities as the basic units for natural resource management**
- promote proper pricing and valuation of resources through the **wider application of market-based regulatory instruments**
- expand availability of **alternative livelihood opportunities** for sectors that have traditionally relied on natural resources for their economic survival
- institute proactive measures to **redress the degraded state of many natural**

resources and thwart imminent threats to protected areas and other critical environmental systems

- harness the full potentials of **science and technology and indigenous knowledge systems** in achieving greater efficiency in resource use while **adopting the precautionary principle** in managing environmental problems, and
- **propagate the view of environment as a common heritage**, intricately woven into the fabric of the Filipino way of life, culture and traditions.

PA21 lists various initiatives and reforms to pursue the five broad goals listed above. It now integrates the action agenda of government, civil society and the private business sector, after explicit efforts were made to incorporate the Business Agenda 21 prepared by the business community. Given the hierarchy of sustainable development challenges facing the nation, especially at this time of global financial crisis and economic downturn, there is need to define a focused set of priority concerns and corresponding actions to address both short-term and medium- to long-term objectives.

Priority Initiatives

Along with addressing the priority green, blue and brown environmental challenges described above, initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change have also become urgent and critical and must now form part of the national and local agendas for sustainable development.

The following form part of the priority agenda over the next five years and beyond:

Green Environment Initiatives

Apart from tighter enforcement of existing forestry laws and proper pricing of forest resources, the following are the imperatives:

- **Continued replication of community-based forest management (CBFM)** schemes, which has been adopted as the national strategy for reversing the destruction of the Philippine's remaining natural forests.
- **Further expansion of reforestation activities** both by the public and private business sectors, i.e., via government and industrial plantations and private tree farming.

Both have already shown positive results in past years and are credited with the recorded increase in forest cover from its lowest point in 1988, when forest cover had been estimated at only 5.4 million hectares or 18.3 percent of total land area, to the current estimate of 7.2 million hectares (24%).

Blue Environment Initiatives

The Coastal Environment Program (CEP) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which integrates programs, projects and initiatives related to or concerning coastal environments, must be faithfully and aggressively implemented. Its primary thrust is promoting **community-based management and sustainable use of resources in the country's coastal areas** by encouraging the use

of environment friendly technologies, providing livelihood opportunities to coastal communities, promoting equitable access to resources, and building DENR capabilities in the management of coastal areas.

In numerous occasions, citizens have expressed the view that the most successful "blue" initiatives are those that empower communities and their respective local governments to enforce laws and manage resources within their jurisdiction. There is growing use of community-based management in the establishment of marine sanctuaries. A key element for success in such sanctuaries is effective partnership among the local governments, local business sector (including owners and operators of beach resorts), and coastal communities.

Brown Environment Initiatives

There is need to **strengthen the capabilities and accountabilities of the local multi-sectoral Solid Waste Management Boards** established in provinces and municipalities according to law. The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act No. 9003), passed by the Philippine Congress in 2000, defines the roles of the different levels of local government in the various aspects of solid waste management. The law mandated the shift to sanitary landfills by February 2004, but at the end of 2004, there were only two operating in the country. As of December 2004 there were only 125 controlled dumpsites and 866 open and non-controlled dumpsites nationwide, representing only about 65 percent of all municipalities.

A stronger and more active role for private sector participation in the management of solid wastes nationwide also needs to be promoted.

Climate Change Initiatives

With its extensive coastline, climate change and global warming are critical issues for the Philippines, which ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2003. There has emerged widespread awareness of the climate change threat in the country, whose agriculture sector and food security are particularly vulnerable to changing climate patterns.

The Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change (IACCC), chaired by the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, was established in 1991 and is tasked to coordinate, develop and monitor functions with respect to climate change-related activities in the country. The country has also been an active and early participant in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and established the Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF) to pioneer emission reduction purchase transactions and to support projects that generate high quality certified emission reductions (CERs) suitable for registration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

CDM projects for which certified emission reductions (CERs) have been traded include a wind power generation project, sugarcane bagasse co-generation projects, and commercial piggery biogas power generation projects. An action plan for climate change adaptation is under formulation through the IACCC.

The Global Downturn: Challenge and Opportunity

The current global financial crisis and economic downturn poses the special challenge of ensuring that short-term responses adopted to stabilize economies in the short term will not undermine longer-term sustainability. This challenge came to the fore during the East Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, when immediate “fire-fighting” responses by governments (including those prescribed by multilateral financial institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund) and by individual firms tended to set aside environmental concerns.

On the part of governments, such short-sighted responses included postponement or actual cancellation of budgetary allocations for environmental concerns and easing of environmental standards in the effort to stimulate immediate economic activity.

On the part of individual firms, there was an observed tendency to defer investments in

environmental control equipment and, in the effort to cut costs, not to operate even those already in place. Such trade-offs that become more acute in times of crisis make the task of planning and defining an action agenda for sustainable development more sensitive and difficult at this time.

There is, on the other hand, an opportunity that the current economic downturn presents. A major difference between the Asian financial crisis episode and the current global downturn is the opposing nature of fiscal policy prescriptions for responding to the respective crises. Whereas Asian governments were called upon to exercise fiscal prudence and undertake spending cutbacks in 1997-98,¹¹ the unanimous call at this time is for fiscal stimulus. This implies a substantial ramp-up in government spending to provide the demand for goods and services that is not forthcoming from private consumers, export markets, and business investors.

In this policy context, the “Global Green New Deal” proposal of the United Nations offers an opportunity for a win-win outcome for both the economy and the environment. The task at hand is to identify the most appropriate public investments (“green public investments”) that would meet both objectives of maximizing the multiplier effect of government spending and attaining long-term sustainability objectives.

Institutional and Implementation Hurdles

For many years, it has been widely lamented that the Philippines has no lack of sound plans, programs, policies and laws, but it is in enforcement and implementation where the failure lies. Failure in enforcement and implementation may be attributed to at least three weaknesses: (1) law enforcement failures, (2) legal failures, and (3) coordination failures.

Law Enforcement Failures

The most conspicuous case in point manifesting the breakdown of environmental law enforcement has been in the enforcement of the logging ban. The government banned the export of unprocessed hardwood logs in 1986, both to arrest the rapid depletion of the nation's forests and to stimulate domestic processing of raw lumber into finished products. In 1991 the government imposed a selective logging ban.

In spite of these, illegal logging has persisted – often attributed to powerful national and local politicians – and massive cutting of trees in the Sierra Madre and Cordillera forests in Luzon and in forested areas in Mindanao continues to this day.¹² An estimated 40 percent of the country's industrial roundwood comes from undocumented sources, thwarting earnest management and conservation efforts.

A similar failure in law enforcement is seen in the continued incursion of commercial fishing vessels within the 15-kilometer zone reserved by the Fisheries Code to small artisanal municipal fishers. Still in fisheries, a perennial problem has also been the persistence of illegal fishpens in both inland and coastal fisheries. Again, the problem in many cases is in powerful political or military interests being either behind or directly responsible for the incursions. Thus, the problem in enforcement of laws protective of the environment commonly boils down to rampant corruption in government.

Apart from corruption, lack of capacity or political will has been another reason for violations of the law on the part of local governments. The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act mentioned above had mandated that all municipalities should have a sanitary landfill by February 2004. This provision of the law has been widely and flagrantly ignored, as only a minority of local governments have so far complied with this requirement.

Still another example of unimplemented legislation is the provision in the Local Government Code of 1991 (R.A. 7160) for the establishment and functioning of multi-stakeholder local development councils at the provincial, municipal and barangay (village) levels of local government. Most local government units (LGUs) have not been faithful in organizing these valuable forums for participatory governance, with most LGUs not even having established such councils, or where established, not convening them in any regular or meaningful way.

Legal Failures

Some of the difficulties of past years stemmed from inconsistencies and ambiguities in the laws themselves. Among the most controversial laws pertaining to the environment has been the 1995 Mining Act, whose constitutionality had been questioned at, and later affirmed by, the Supreme Court.

The other major problem has been the inconsistency of certain provisions of the Mining Act with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 (R.A. 8371), which recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous peoples to ancestral domain and lands; their right to self-governance, economic and social rights; and their cultural integrity, including indigenous culture, traditions and institutions. However, the Mining Act is being invoked by investors and certain government offices (including the Office of the President) in allowing mining exploration and development activities in areas that would otherwise be barred from such by the IPRA.

Still another problem with legislation concerns the Clean Air Act of 1999 (R.A. 8749), which among other things stipulates a total ban on incineration, thereby creating difficulties for the disposal of certain types of hazardous wastes for which incineration has been deemed to be the safest mode of disposal available.

These instances have led to situations where non-enforcement and non-implementation of environment-related laws have been facilitated by flaws or impractical provisions in the laws themselves.

Coordination Failures

Most of the environmental challenges confronting the country require interagency, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approaches and solutions. While the Philippines has been at the forefront of establishing multi-stakeholder coordinative and consultative mechanisms to deal with sustainable development and other governance concerns, difficulties of coordination remain, especially because government has always been organized along distinct sectoral lines. Notwithstanding this, overlapping and duplicating functions across government departments and offices are common.

A fundamental obstacle to sustainable land and natural resource use in the Philippines is its inefficient and ineffective land use administration system. As observed by the European Commission Delegation in the Philippines, “There is a complex situation of overlapping of agencies and laws. There are also multiple standards for land valuation, which offer ample opportunities for corruption.”¹³ The country’s land administration and management system is in dire need of an overhaul, which would involve consolidation of functions currently lying within several land registration and administration agencies.

The Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), the first national council for sustainable development established in the world after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, was established to provide the venue for interagency, inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination, consultation and consensus-building. Chaired by the Secretary of Socioeconomic Planning, who exercises an oversight role in government in the implementation of the country’s development plans, the PCSD’s effectiveness has varied through its 16 years of existence, primarily conditioned by the degree of commitment to sustainable development and PCSD

by the top leadership, including the President and the Secretary of Socioeconomic Planning.

While such commitment was strong under the presidency of Fidel V. Ramos in the 1990s, the same degree of support was unfortunately not provided by his successors and their respective planning secretaries, thereby rendering PCSD to lose its former prominence. This has led many to question the usefulness and efficacy of PCSD as a forum for pursuing sustainable development goals of the country at the present time.

From the above discussions, the picture that emerges is one where the appropriate elements of a strategy and action agenda for reconciling economic and environmental objectives of Philippine development are already in place. The main barrier, however, to achieving desired outcomes and impact is inadequacies in institutions and mechanisms – and in the people comprising them – for translating strategies, policies and programs into concrete action.

Where Do Children Fit In?

Children of both the present and future are not just the primary stakeholders and main beneficiaries of sustainable development; they can also be among the most effective instruments for its achievement. It stands to reason that children and youth should figure prominently in the work for sustainable development, starting from planning and on to execution and advocacy. The reality, however, is that the welfare of children tends to be given inadequate attention in the formulation of development plans – let alone sustainable development strategies – and in the design of various programs and projects to translate plans into action.

It should be no surprise, therefore, that children were found by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) to be among the three poorest sectors in Philippine society in 2006.¹⁴ And the reason for this is that children tend to be overlooked as important participants in charting their very futures. Adult planners may argue that

they were children themselves once upon a time, and that they have a personal concern for the children in their own families, enough to know how to address the needs of children both in the present and future.

In one relatively successful environment program built on effective multi-stakeholder partnerships, representation for children was deliberately provided for in the provincial steering committees – with the designated representative being an official from the Department of Education.

It is easy to overlook the fact that the environment, circumstances and trends within which the current generation of children exists are vastly different from that which adults today knew in their own childhood years. Hence, adults today, no matter how deeply concerned with the welfare of children, can never validly presume to speak for them. Mechanisms must thus be found to genuinely and meaningfully involve children in sustainable development planning, so that the plans that emerge are truly responsive to the needs and aspirations of the successor generation and those still to come.

Beyond plan formulation, the way that children tend to be involved in implementation of initiatives falling out of plans likewise reveals a lack of appreciation among adults of the significant and potent role that children can play in the quest for a sustainable future. Too often, children are seen merely as contributing no more than physical effort in community-level initiatives. Thus, a common feature of community environmental projects is to get schoolchildren out of their classrooms and mobilize them to pick up trash and do minor sprucing up of community facilities and surroundings.

To limit them to such roles is to grossly underestimate children's potentials in effecting change in society. It is said that children are the best entry point to the minds and hearts of adults, particularly of their parents and other adults within their households. Thus, they are particularly critical objects of advocacies for sustainability, as they subsequently become effective exponents ("change agents") of such advocacies towards changing

attitudes of other children, but more especially of adults around them.

Innovative child-driven advocacy initiatives such as community environmental theaters have already proven useful in many places. Children have also proven to be effective in mass media campaigns to "conscienticize" adults towards more ethical and sustainable behavior. Finally, it is well worth remembering that the leaders and key decision-makers of tomorrow are among the children of today; it is clear that deliberate investments must be made today in properly equipping the successor generation of leaders in Philippine society, politics and governance.

Summary and Conclusions

Being a country that is among the most naturally-endowed in the world, the Philippines has fallen victim to the commonly-observed "natural resource curse," with its abundant natural wealth seemingly having become a liability rather than an instrument for achieving prosperity.

Its mixed record of economic growth through past decades has been marked by rapid degradation of the environment and depletion of its natural resource base. From an economy dominated by primary resource-based production activities up until the 1980s, it has transformed into one primarily propelled by services, although the primary industries in the rural sector continue to provide a disproportionate share of employment for the working population.

The abundant wealth in the country's forests was rapidly exploited and depleted in the past century, most especially in recent decades until the 1990s, when policies finally began to take cognizance of the need to arrest the decline. Population pressures and short-sighted human economic activities have severely stressed the country's marine and freshwater resources, posing serious threat on the country's food security and public health. Industrialization, urbanization, and intensive agriculture over the past decades have dramatically impaired the quality of the country's

air, water, and soil, in most cases resulting in clear and present danger to public health.

Economic activities have also contributed to the global phenomenon of climate change which is of particular importance to the country, whose vulnerability to this global threat draws from its archipelagic geography and more than 36,000 kilometers of coastline.

The strategy and corresponding action agenda for reconciling the country's economic, social and environmental development goals is already well laid out in Philippine Agenda 21, which has been described as the most widely-consulted planning document the country has had so far. Concrete programs, initiatives and mechanisms are in place for addressing the various green, blue and brown environment issues confronting the country.

For maximum efficiency and effectiveness, there is need to focus on approaches that promise greatest success. Community-based approaches have already demonstrated a positive track record, particularly in the sustainable management of forest and coastal resources. Mechanisms based on multi-stakeholder partnerships have likewise proven effective when allowed to function fully and freely. The way forward, then, is to scale up and scale out such tested mechanisms that work well and to strengthen them with the necessary policy and resource support.

Within government, the imperative is for close teamwork and coordination, given the multidimensional, inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral nature of sustainable development challenges. Thus, bodies such as the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change, Local Solid Waste Management Boards, and Local Development

Councils need to be made to function actively and spearhead concrete initiatives to operationalize sustainable development at the national, local and community levels.

Good governance is the critical underlay that provides the vital foundation for all efforts to achieve sustainable development for the country. Until the current persistent governance weaknesses in the Philippines are overcome, and law enforcement failures, legal failures and coordination failures are transformed from current realities into things of the past, achievement of win-win outcomes for the economy and the environment – and hence, sustainable development – will remain a distant dream.

Finally, children and youth, apart from being the primary stakeholders and main beneficiaries of sustainable development, can also be among the most effective instruments for its achievement. It is important to make deliberate efforts to provide genuine and meaningful involvement of children in all aspects of sustainable development work, spanning planning to execution and advocacy. They are far more than mere contributors of muscle power to help pick up trash and clean up community facilities.

Much more importantly, they could be the most effective agents for changing the minds and hearts of other children, and more importantly, of adults around them towards fundamental changes in attitudes and behaviors. This, in the end, is the first step required in changing the course of current trends that are leading the country, and indeed the world, into a path of unsustainability.

Endnotes

- ¹ This observation has also been described as the “paradox of plenty,” and is discussed by, among others, Auty (1993) and Sachs and Warner (1995).
- ² Based on information gathered by Conservation International (CI).
- ³ See Habito (2005).
- ⁴ Latest official data report poverty incidence in the country to have risen from 24.7 percent of families in 2003 to 26.9 percent in 2006.
- ⁵ Philippine Agenda 21 was officially promulgated by the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (then chaired by the author), on September 26, 1996, after two years of wide consultation. It has recently been updated, modified and enhanced into what is now known as the Enhanced Philippine Agenda 21.
- ⁶ The following sections draw liberally from World Bank (2004), ECP (2005), PCSD (2006) and Ibon Foundation (2006).
- ⁷ Data are estimates by Haribon and other NGOs, as cited in World Bank (2004) and Ibon Databank (2006). DENR estimates tend to be lower.
- ⁸ Data in this and the succeeding paragraph are based on data cited from various authors in World Bank (2004).
- ⁹ Estimates by the National Solid Waste Commission.
- ¹⁰ Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (<http://www.cleanairnet.org/caiasia>).
- ¹¹ In the active policy debates during the time, it was argued by some even then that this prescription was misplaced and outright erroneous.
- ¹² Annual confiscations have amounted to 12 to 15 thousand cubic meters yearly. However, the level of confiscations is not a reliable indicator of the real extent of illegal logging.
- ¹³ ECP (2005).
- ¹⁴ “Globalization fails to lift Pinoys out of poverty,” *Business Mirror*, June 26-27, 2009, p. A3.

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Impact on Public Governance on the Rights of the Filipino Child

By Dr. Wilfrido V. Villacorta

Introduction

Forecasting the political future of the Filipino child by 2025 must take into consideration the development of the nation's political system and political culture. In this paper, we shall present both the positive and negative trends in child protection in the Philippines.

1. Supportive Factors

1.1 Constitutional Framework

The principle of protection of children's rights as an obligation of the State is enshrined in the fundamental law of the land. The present Constitution of the Philippines, which was overwhelmingly ratified by the people in a plebiscite in 1987, directs the State to defend the "right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development."¹ It antedated by two years the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and was the first Constitution in the world to contain explicit provisions on protection and assistance to children and the right to education.

Article XIV of the Philippine Constitution addresses the educational needs and rights of children. It provides 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."² The State is mandated to: "establish and maintain a system of free public education in the elementary and high school levels"; "establish and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students in both public and private schools, especially to the under-privileged"; "encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs"; and "provide adult citizens, the disabled,

and out-of-school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency, and other skills."³

Social and moral values in the education of the child are highlighted in Section 3 of the Constitution: "All educational institutions shall include the study of the Constitution as part of the curricula. . . (and) shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency."⁴

Recognizing that education had not been given the priority that it deserves in the allocation of government resources, the Constitution obliges the State to "assign the highest budgetary priority to education and 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 fulfillment."⁵

1.2 International Framework

Two years after the approval of the Philippine Constitution, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in November 1989. The CRC is the first international instrument to focus on the whole spectrum of human rights—civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. It provides the legal framework for basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival, the right to develop to the fullest, the right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, and the right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.⁶

The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines "child" as a person under the age of 18 years and asserts that the child must develop his or her full potential free from hunger and want, neglect, abuse or exploitation. The CRC underscores the right to education (Article 28) and

to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. It provides that education shall be directed to “the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potentials” (Article 29).

Supplementing the Convention are the Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. These two optional protocols strengthened the international framework on the protection of children’s human rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child finds support from the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In September 2000, the 192 UN member states committed themselves to a new global partnership aimed at reducing extreme poverty by 2015. The following year, the development agenda was operationalized as the eight Millennium Development Goals— a set of time-bound and measurable targets addressing poverty, hunger, child mortality, disease, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. In achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the special conditions and needs of State Parties are considered.⁷ Former UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy called on world leaders to put children at the heart of their Millennium Development Goals agenda and to place children’s rights at the forefront of long-term social and economic development thinking.

She said that if the world was to eradicate extreme poverty and eliminate hunger, children now being born must get what previous generations of marginalized children have not gotten: a healthy start in life; quality basic education; and a safe and loving environment in which to thrive.

Director Bellamy emphasized that “if children’s rights to education, to protection and to survival and health are not fully realized, the world will not be on track to meet the goals. True development progress hinges on children.”⁸

1.3 Rights-Based National Plan

In January 1990, the Philippines was one of the first UN member-states to sign the CRC. The Philippine Senate ratified it in August 1990.

The Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (2000-2025), popularly known as Child 21, recognizes the crucial role of governance and political development in safeguarding the welfare of the child. Articulated in its vision is the view that “the nation’s primary goal concerning children is to create an enabling environment for children to grow and develop their full potential at every stage of development.”⁹

This priority given to creating an enabling environment for children is consistent with Article Three of the CRC which states, “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (Sec. 1).” The CRC also mandates that “State Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures” (Sec. 2). Article Four directs State Parties to “undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention” (Sec. 4).

A crucial strategy for achieving a child-friendly society is a paradigm shift to put children first in the use of resources of the family, community and the State.¹⁰ Child 21 underscores the importance of institutional transformations that include “an educational system responsive to the learning needs of children,” “a health care system including health insurance to be responsive to the unique health needs of children at every stage of the life cycle,” “a justice system sensitive to the conditions

of the child at every stage of the juvenile justice system,” and “a legislative system that puts children first and promotes and protects child rights.”¹¹

The national government is expectedly the most prominent key player in implementing Child 21 strategies.¹² Its tasks are the following:

- Forge international cooperation in monitoring and eliminating threats to child rights, especially child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children and child labor
- Provide safety nets for children especially those in need of special protection and those in especially difficult circumstances
- Pursue peaceful resolution to armed conflict
- Prioritize budget for and funds allocation to programs that promote child rights
- Promote international exchanges among children and groups working with children to enrich the children’s agenda
- Conduct further research and development on the situation of children.

The rights-based strategy of Child 21 has set the following goals that the Filipino child must have attained by 2025:

- Born healthy and well with an inherent right to life, endowed with human dignity;
- Happy, loved and nurtured by a strong, stable and God-loving family;
- Living in a peaceful, progressive, gender-fair and child-friendly society;
- Growing safe in a healthy environment and ecology;
- Free and protected by a responsible and enabling government;

- Reaching his/her full potential with the right opportunities and accessible resources;
- Imbued with Filipino values steeped in his/her indigenous cultural heritage;
- Assertive of his/her rights as well as those of others; and
- Actively participating in decision making and governance, in harmony and in solidarity with others, in sustaining the Filipino nation.

1.4 Legislation on the Rights of the Child

The fruition of Child 21’s objectives depends largely on the enabling laws that are passed by the Philippine Congress.

The first law that promotes children’s rights is the Child and Youth Welfare Code (Presidential Decree No. 603), which was promulgated on 10 December 1974.¹³ It enumerates the Rights of the Child to which “all children shall be entitled to the rights herein set forth without distinction as to legitimacy or illegitimacy, sex, social status, religion, political antecedents, and other factors”:

1. Every child is endowed with the dignity and worth of a human being from the moment of his conception, as generally accepted in medical parlance, and has, therefore, the right to be born well.
2. Every child has the right to a wholesome family life that will provide him with love, care and understanding, guidance and counseling, and moral and material security.
3. Every child has the right to a well-rounded development of his personality to the end that he may become a happy, useful and active member of society.
4. Every child has the right to a balanced diet, adequate clothing, sufficient shelter,

proper medical attention, and all the basic physical requirements of a healthy and vigorous life.

5. Every child has the right to be brought up in an atmosphere of morality and rectitude for the enrichment and the strengthening of his character.
6. Every child has the right to an education commensurate with his abilities and to the development of his skills for the improvement of his capacity for service to himself and to his fellowmen.
7. Every child has the right to full opportunities for safe and wholesome recreation and activities, individual as well as social, for the wholesome use of his leisure hours.
8. Every child has the right to protection against exploitation, improper influences, hazards, and other conditions or circumstances prejudicial to his physical, mental, emotional, social and moral development.
9. Every child has the right to live in a community and a society that can offer him an environment free from pernicious influences and conducive to the promotion of his health and the cultivation of his desirable traits and attributes.
10. Every child has the right to the care, assistance, and protection of the State, particularly when his parents or guardians fail or are unable to provide him with his fundamental needs for growth, development, and improvement.
11. Every child has the right to an efficient and honest government that will deepen his

faith in democracy and inspire him with the morality of the constituted authorities both in their public and private lives.

12. Every child has the right to grow up as a free individual, in an atmosphere of peace, understanding, tolerance, and universal brotherhood, and with the determination to contribute his share in the building of a better world.

Thirteen years later, the Philippine Congress was reinstated by the post-Marcos Constitution. It passed legislation which complemented the Code and complied with the new Constitution's mandate on the rights and welfare of children. Republic Act 6655, which provided for free public secondary education, was passed on 20 May, 1988. Republic Act 6972, which instituted a program for the total development and protection of children, was signed into law in November 1990. Republic Act 7610, "An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination," was passed in June 1992. Republic Act 7658, "An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Children Below 15 Years of Age in Public and Private Undertakings," was approved in October 1993. It amended Article VII of Republic Act 7610.

Other significant legislation include Republic Act 8980 (National System for Early Childhood Care and Development, 5 December 2000); Republic Act 9231 (Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor, 19 December 2003); Republic Act 9208 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, 6 May 2003); Republic Act 9262 (Defining Violence Against Women and Their Children and Providing Protective Measures for Victims, 8 March 2004); and Republic Act 9344 (Comprehensive Juvenile Justice and Welfare System, 28 April 2006).¹⁴

2. Challenges and Constraints

2.1. Misgovernance

We know, however, that more essential than UN and constitutional declarations, national development plans and legislation are legal enforcement and compliance by the State. The full protection of children's rights remains an aspiration for as long as we face the following challenges:

- The Philippine political and justice systems are plagued with corruption.
- Because of the lack in good governance, nearly half of the population are below the poverty line and are deprived of basic health services and quality education.
- Weakness in governance has led to increased drugs trade and human trafficking which have victimized children, who are the most vulnerable sector of the population.
- Inadequate job opportunities have driven thousands of Filipinos to work abroad, resulting in physical separation of families and dysfunctional rearing of the children of most migrant workers.
- The educational system and mass media have been wanting in their duty to instill moral and social values among the youth.

Governance plays a key role in safeguarding the well-being of children and in preparing them to face the challenges of the 21st century. The poor performance of the Philippines is due to its being a weak state and a weak market. The Philippines has been rated by the World Bank as the most corrupt among the leading economies in East Asia.¹⁵ Transparency International included the Philippines in the top quintile (more than 32 percent) of countries perceived to be most affected by bribery, along with Albania, Cambodia, Cameroon, Macedonia, Kosovo, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania and Senegal.¹⁶

The Philippine model of misgovernance which has been perpetuated since the early years of independence has the following counter-progressive characteristics:

1. Wealth control and accumulation dominated by the political and economic elite;
2. Political power and electoral success monopolized by political dynasties;
3. Politicized bureaucracy and military;
4. Quality education limited to a few educational institutions to which a small minority of the population has access;
5. Political vulnerability of the poor who suffer from social marginalization.

Misgovernance and corruption exacerbate poverty, and it is the poor children who are the primary victims of the consequences of massive poverty: malnutrition, disease and substandard education.

2.2 Cycle of Malnutrition and Inequity

Scientific studies have shown that severe malnutrition is linked to more than half of child deaths, poor cognitive development and low productivity.¹⁷ The Council for the Welfare of Children reminds us that malnutrition is not only the effect of inequity but also among the factors that give rise to conditions that create inequities.¹⁸

According to the 2005 survey of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST), about 24.6 percent of children 0-5 years old (numbering 3.2 million) were underweight-for-age, 2.1 percent (3.5 million) were stunted, and 4.8 percent (0.6 million) were wasted or thin for their height.¹⁹

For the 6-10 years old, under-nutrition affected about 22.8 percent of those underweight-for-age (translated to 2.5 million children) and 32 percent of those stunted for growth (3.5 million).²⁰

For adolescents, approximately 16 percent of 11-19 years old were reported to be underweight, with the prevalence among the pre-teens (11-12 years old) being higher than that for the 13-19 years age group. More males were affected than females, almost at a 1:2 ratio—for every underweight female, there would be two underweight males.²¹

Based on the results of the 2003 national nutrition survey, the prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency disorders among infants is 47 percent, and among children, 40.1 percent – higher than among pregnant (17.5 percent) and lactating women (20.1 percent).²²

Even more serious is anemia prevalence, which was the highest among infants 6-11 months old at 66.2 percent and among one-year-old children at about 53 percent. It remains as the worst nutritional problem among pregnant (43.9%) and lactating (42.2%) women.

Malnutrition has a direct impact on academic performance. The 2000 Philippine Human Development Report described the poor results of the nationally-administered National Elementary Achievement Test and National Secondary Achievement Test. These two tests showed that students gave correct answers to less than 50 percent of the questions. The Philippines also performed poorly in the Third International Mathematics and Science Test, ranking second from the bottom in the mathematics category and third from the bottom in the science category.²³

2.3 Schools and Underdevelopment

The Philippine Human Development Report attributes the quality deficit primarily to the inadequate budget for education. As of 1997, the national education budget was only about four percent of the Gross National Product, and expenditure per pupil in 1996 was P1396 (1985 prices). The pattern of spending in schools was skewed in favor of personnel services (salaries and other forms of compensation) at the expense of capital outlays as well as maintenance and other operating expenses, such as textbooks, library and laboratory supplies.

There is also a dearth of highly competent teachers. Lacking in books and other learning materials, the students depend on their teachers as the primary source of learning. The inadequate preparation of teachers is evident in the teachers' dismal performance in the Professional Board Exam for Teachers.²⁴

2.4 Vulnerability to Crime

Poor children are easy targets of exploitation by criminal elements, such as drug and prostitution syndicates.²⁵ It is estimated by NGOs that about 60,000 – 100,000 children are trafficked annually, and some quarters claim that trafficking cases are increasing.²⁶

Poverty brought about by misgovernance has driven thousands of Filipinos to find employment abroad. With migrant workers' separation from their families, their children become the main casualties because of dysfunctional upbringing that they have to endure. There are so many cases of marriage breakup resulting from the physical separation of migrant workers from their spouses, as well as abuse and neglect of children.

In her paper, "Women and Children as Victims of Crime," Assistant Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Lourdes Balanon observes that the burden on the Filipino family to respond to the increasing needs of its members has curbed its nurturing role to its members. "Women are constrained to work in rural areas or abroad, leaving their families behind. This situation leads to lack of supervision of children, making them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Children, at times, are left to fend for themselves or they too have to work in the streets, factories or establishments, exposing them to hazardous and exploitative working conditions."²⁷

She concedes that despite the passage of laws meant to protect children's rights and welfare, enforcement of existing laws is wanting and needs improvement. She also believes that more attention should be given to the healing, recovery and reintegration of victims/survivors upon return to their own families and communities. There are

only three therapy centers or residential facilities for women and children, which implement a comprehensive program to prepare for their return to the community and to remove stigmatization of the victims.

Balanon calls for a comprehensive, integrated and holistic approach to combat trafficking and other crimes committed against women from the community level up to the regional/international level. She also emphasizes the need to make the criminal justice system gender-fair and sensitive and child-friendly to ensure that the women and children victims of abuse and exploitation are treated with dignity and to prevent revictimization.

UNICEF notes that since the 1970s, child pornography experienced a boom, particularly in the United States where an estimated 300,000 to 600,000 children under 16 were fielded as models. Pornographers moved their operations to countries with lax laws such as the Philippines when strict laws were established in the US and Western Europe.²⁸

Today, the advent of the Internet and digital cameras has made child pornography even more pervasive, while making it more difficult for authorities to track the growing number of both pornographers and their victims.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development reports that anywhere between 60,000 to 600,000 street children are victims of child prostitution. In fact, the Philippines ranks fourth among countries with the most number of prostituted children. A study by the Psychological Trauma Program of the University of the Philippines notes that prostitution may now be the country's fourth largest source of GNP. While some data on child prostitution are available, they do not reflect the even larger number of children being victimized through child pornography.

2.5 Deterioration in Moral Values

Growing neglect by parents and the State could have been balanced by the positive influence of schools and the mass media. Unfortunately, these

two institutions have not fully lived up to their responsibility to impart moral and social values. Dr. Maria Lourdes Carandang warns against the role of media in reinforcing a culture of violence. "The bombardment of violence by media is sometimes justified as mirroring the realities around us. But continuous exposure to violence in the raw, without any commentary or educational component, can inadvertently glamorize violence. It would be better if showings of violent events have been accompanied by lessons learned. But this step still needs to be done."²⁹

Moreover, local customs and traditions that we would like to preserve in the consciousness of our youths will continue to erode as unfettered globalization exposes them to role models who project examples of greed and materialism.

3. Consequences of the Deteriorating Situation of the Filipino Child

One needs only to walk through poor urban and rural communities throughout the country to be appalled by the squalid and wretched condition suffered by hapless children. In 2005, the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (PREDA) Foundation—which was twice nominated to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 and 2003—submitted a report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Philippines to the Committee on the Rights of Child in its 38th Session in Geneva, Switzerland. The following were some of its findings:³⁰

- "The laws in the Philippines against commercial sexual exploitation of children, child prostitution, child sex tourism and trafficking are multiple. Regrettably, these kind of practices have been too often observed and are clearly in contravention with the prescribed Philippine law and Article 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)."

- “Of the reported 1.5 million street children in the Philippines, 60,000 are prostituted. This makes the Philippines the fourth in nine countries with the most number of children in prostitution. Based on a report that 20% of the 50,000 prostituted women are minors, UNICEF provides a higher estimate: that there are 100,000 girls in the country. The DSWD, on the other hand, claims that the annual average increase of prostituted children is 3,266. It also reported a more than 100% increase in the case of sexually abused and exploited children. Rape constituted thirty-six percent (36%) of the reported cases, while child prostitution and paedophilia accounted for twelve percent (12%).”
- “There is also the reverse flow - the out-migration of under-aged youth for the purpose of prostitution abroad. State policies and programs and the international demand for cheap labor abroad have also facilitated the massive migration of women, even young girls, for work overseas. Government policies favor the export of entertainers and domestic helpers that put the lives of children and young women at risk.”
- “Although more stringent laws against trafficking have been passed in 2003, notably the already discussed Republic Act No.9208, implementation of these laws have been weak so far. No effective prosecution of traffickers takes place due to corruption, weak judiciary and absence of enforcement of legislation.”
- “Although there is ample legislation for improving the Juvenile Justice System, implementation has so far been wanting. PREDA reported that “each day, 36 to 54 Filipino children – including girls and kids with mental disabilities – are jailed with adult prisoners everyday.” Its report was based on statistics of the Public Attorney’s Office which reported having

handled 13,300 cases involving children in conflict with the law (36 kids per day) in that year. The office of Philippine Senator Francis Pangilinan also expressed concern that 20,000 Filipino kids were jailed (54 kids per day) in 2003.

These youths “languish and are jailed with adult prisoners in cramped police jails where a number of them get raped, tortured, and tattooed and deprived of access to legal, medical, social, and psychological assistance and services in an institutionalized act of unlawful discrimination by the Philippine government against the children of the poorest of the poor.”

Unmitigated official corruption exacerbates poverty and takes away scarce resources that otherwise would have been used to improve the education, health and living conditions of Filipino children. A more recent study of global corruption was conducted in 2008 by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC). The Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and China were rated by expatriates as the most corrupt Asian economies, according to the PERC poll results.³¹ In the Social Weather Stations survey fielded in June 2009, the proportion of families experiencing involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months rose to 20.3 percent or an estimated 3.7 million families, from 15.5 percent or an estimated 2.9 million families in the previous quarter.³² Misgovernance persists in warping the mental, emotional and physical well-being of the Filipino youth.

4. Desired Scenarios for the Next Generations

Despite the bleak situation that has been described, there remain positive features in Philippine society that could open opportunities for the Filipino child:

1. The majority of the voting population are young.
2. Filipinos have positively responded to advances in the New Media.

3. The global economic crisis can serve as stimulus for social reform.
4. Vigilant civil society organizations abound in the Philippines.
5. There is a large pool of talented and dedicated Filipinos across sectors.

If properly informed and mobilized, our young population would be more empowered to elect leaders of integrity who will support child-friendly policies and enforce these policies. The youth of this country are more assertive and open-minded, and value free expression and individual freedoms.

Already, a movement has been established to mobilize the youth, who compose the majority of the potential voting population, for the 2010 elections. This potential “youth power” can become a reality only if the youth register and actually vote in 2010.

But it is not just enfranchising the youth. They must be made aware of the issues to be able to wisely exercise their right of suffrage. They must not be vulnerable to intimidation and vote-buying. The Filipino youth must be informed of their rights as well as the importance of strengthening democracy in their country.

Dr. Julio Teehankee observes that there has been a generational shift in the leadership structure in the Philippines. In his study, “Generational Shift and Elite Reproduction: Up-and-Coming Leaders in the Philippines,” he notes that younger individuals have been gradually taking higher positions in business and politics: “While majority of them are scions of the previous generation, the ongoing generational shift provides an opportunity for incremental change and reforms. Within the military, the young junior officers have always been proponents of reforms in the defense establishment. While their agitations have oftentimes resulted in military adventurism (e.g., Oakwood mutiny of 2003), a greater number of them choose to take the constitutional path to initiate reforms from within.”³³

Teehankee’s study profiled a total of 118 up-and-coming political, economic and military leaders in the Philippines: 60 legislators from the House of Representatives whose age ranges from 25 to 45; 20 young economic leaders who would fall under the age bracket of 35 to 45; and 38 military leaders with the rank of Major or its Navy equivalent, Lieutenant Commander, up to the rank of Colonel or its Navy equivalent, Captain, whose age ranges from 33 to 52.

Teehankee concludes that as societies undergo internal differentiation, its elites become more differentiated and specialized. Hence, traditional elites are often transformed into strategic elites. He stresses that a shift in generations is usually accompanied by changes in outlook and the functions, roles and skills performed by the next generation of elites. This transformation, he believes, may provide a narrow window for change and reform in the political system.³⁴

5. Unlocking Prospects of the New Media

But it is not merely the generational shift in the leadership structure and in the voting populations that holds promise for the goals of Child 21. The New Media bring in exciting prospects that would unleash opportunities for greater self-expression and creativity among the youth—a clear asset to democracy and ultimately to the advancement of the rights of the child.

The popularity of texting, instant messaging, e-mails, social networking and blogging has contributed to faster and wider communication among the youth. Internet usage in the country has reached 14 million or 16 percent of the population, as of April 2007.³⁵ The burgeoning mobile telephone market in the Philippines—now the texting capital of the world³⁶— has attracted significant investment in infrastructure in the telecommunications sector.

Text messaging played a major role in mobilizing people for the second People Power in January 2001. Further advances in networked electronic communication will empower the youth and bring about a dramatic political, cultural and intellectual transformation.³⁷

6. Reason to be Hopeful

Despite its flaws, our democracy is one of the most vibrant in the world. Our civil society organizations are active in upholding and monitoring the implementation of human rights. Their international linkages have enhanced their resources and their ability to improve social conditions, including those of the Filipino child.

We are still one of the Asian countries with the highest literacy rate. The Philippines has an enormous pool of talented citizens who, if given the right opportunities, can contribute to our collective social, political and economic advancement. There remain principled and dedicated Filipinos in government and military service, academe as well as in the business and religious sectors who are committed to defend the public interest and that of the next generation. Once our predominantly young population votes for better leaders and the country moves forward, we can expect Filipinos who have settled abroad to come back and devote their skills and resources for the motherland's rehabilitation.

Instead of giving up hope, the priority of older generations should be to leave behind a politically and economically empowered nation for the next generations. It should be a Philippines where citizens are not trained and destined to be migrant workers but to be beneficiaries of an inclusive globalization process where costs and benefits are equitably shared.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We have noted that there are facilitating factors that support the cause of children's rights in the Philippines. These rights are contained in the Philippine Constitution, which was promulgated two years before the adoption by the United Nations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Philippine Congress, which was reinstated by the post-Marcos Constitution, passed substantial legislation that complied with the new Constitution's mandate on the rights and welfare of children.

These facilitating factors notwithstanding, public misgovernance has been the major obstacle to the realization of child protection. More essential than UN and constitutional mandates, national development plans and legislation are legal enforcement and compliance by the State. The full protection of children's rights remains an aspiration, with nearly half of the population being below the poverty line and deprived of basic health services and quality education.

Hope for the improvement of children's lives and our society as a whole lies in empowering our young population. It is based on this premise that the study submits the following recommendations:

1. Candidates in the forthcoming national and local elections in 2010 should give priority to children's rights in their campaign platforms. Both the political aspirants and the voting public should be made aware of the necessity of building a better society for the future generations. The youth must be enfranchised and must be educated to wisely exercise their right of suffrage. They must be informed of their rights as well as the importance of strengthening democracy in their country.

Civil society should be vigilant in ensuring that stronger laws protecting children's rights are passed. Should there be a constitutional convention, public pressure should bear on the delegates that the new constitution they will frame will guarantee effective implementation of laws governing child protection.

2. The New Media should be tapped to unlock opportunities for greater self-expression and creativity among the youth—a clear asset to democracy and ultimately to the advancement of the rights of the child.
3. The political leadership and the citizenry should aspire to turn globalization into a positive force that will benefit our young population. Our people's international exposure and the use of English as a medium of instruction have enabled us

to more easily adapt to globalization. The current globalization crisis has increased awareness and appreciation for the need to be less dependent on overseas employment and to create more industries and generate more local employment.

Improving the conditions of our children in earnest is directly linked to the future of the nation as a whole. Better educated, healthier and well-raised children will generate fresh generations of leaders, talents and workforce that would bring technology, industry and politics in our country to a higher level. Change is taking place all over our region and the world. We cannot allow ourselves to be resigned to being in a "changeless" land. Change is possible as long as we choose the right leaders. By guaranteeing good governance for the next generations, we are ensuring that their rights will be protected. Only then shall we have the peace of mind that the Filipino children of the future will be safer, happier and better treated.

Endnotes

- ¹ Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines (adopted in 1987), Article XV, Section 3, para.2.
- ² Article XIV, Section 1.
- ³ Article XIV, Section 2.
- ⁴ Article XIV, Section 3.
- ⁵ Article XIV, Section 5.
- ⁶ <<http://www.thinkcentre.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=2650>>, accessed 7 December 2008.
- ⁷ See Appendix for the Philippine indicators for the Millennium Development Goals.
- ⁸ UNICEF, 2003, "Children's Rights at the Heart of Millennium Development Goals," <http://www.unicef.org/media/media_16324.html>, accessed on 24 November 2008.
- ⁹ Council for the Welfare of Children, 2006, The Filipino Child of the Millennium National Plan of Action for Children: 2005- 2010 (Quezon City: CWC), p. 9.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 12.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 23.
- ¹³ The Child and Youth Welfare Code (Presidential Decree No. 603 <<http://www.chanrobles.com/childandjuvenilewelfare/codeofthephilippines.htm>>, accessed on 23 November 2008.
- ¹⁴ Council for the Welfare of Children et al., 1999, Laws and Issuances on Children, Vol. I (Q.C.: CWC); Council for the Welfare of Children, 2005, Laws and Issuances on Children, Vol. 2 (Q.C.: CWC); Ateneo Human Rights Center–Adhikain para sa Karapatang Pambata in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, 2002, Opening Doors: A Presentation of Laws Protecting Filipino Child Workers (Makati City: ILO and Ateneo Human Rights Center); Sedfrey Candelaria (ed.), 1997, The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Philippine Legal System (Makati City: Adhikain para sa Karapatang Pambata of the Ateneo Human Rights Center).
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- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p. 26.
- ²¹ Ibid., p. 28.
- ²² Ibid., p. 29.
- ²³ Human Development Network, 2000, Philippine Human Development Report (Makati: United Nations Development Program). <<http://hdn.org.ph/2000-philippine-human-development-report-quality-relevance-and-access-in-basic-education>>, accessed on 14 December 2008.

- ²⁴ Chapter One: Quality, Access and Relevance in Basic Education in Philippine Human Development Report, 2000, op. cit. <http://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2000_PHDR/D.%20Chap1.pdf>, accessed on 14 December 2008.
- ²⁵ See Wing-Cheong Chan (ed.). 2007. *Support for Victims of Crime in Asia* (Oxford: Routledge).
- ²⁶ Council for the Welfare of Children, 2008, 2006 State of the Filipino Children Report (Quezon City: CWC), p. 19.
- ²⁷ Lourdes Balanon, 1998, "Women and Children as Victims of Crime," <<http://www.acpf.org/WC7th/PapersItem5/PpPhilippinesBalanonItem5.htm>>, accessed on 3 December 2008.
- ²⁸ UNICEF Philippines, 2007, "Stop Child Pornography Today!" <http://www.unicef.org/philippines/support/sup_12.html>, accessed on 27 November 2008.
- ²⁹ Ma. Lourdes Carandang, 2008, "What is Happening to the Filipino Family?" in Ma. Lourdes A. Carandang and Dr. Queena N. Lee-Chua (eds.), *The Filipino Family Surviving the World: Psychological Essays on the Family* (Manila: Anvil Publishing), pp. 3-7.
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- ³¹ Philippine Daily Inquirer, 23 March 2008.
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- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Internet Worldstats <<http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia/ph.htm>>, accessed on 18 December 2008.
- ³⁶ It is claimed that by 2005, there were 34.78 million cellphone subscribers in the Philippines. <<http://salaswildthoughts.blogspot.com/2006/08/plague-for-philippines-texting-capital.html>>, accessed on 18 December 2008.
- ³⁷ For analyses on social impact of texting, see Rich Ling, 2004, *The Mobile Connection: The Cell Phone's Impact on Society* (San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann); Vicente Rafael. "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines," in *Public Culture*, v.15, n.3, Oct. 2003, 399-425; Raul Perterra, *Mobile Phones, Identity and Discursive Intimacy*, "Human Technology," Volume 1 (1), April 2005, 23-44; Mediappro, 2006, *The Appropriation of New Media by Youth* (Brussels: European Commission). <<http://www.mediappro.org/publications/finalreport.pdf>>, accessed on 22 November 2008.

Appendix A: Millennium Development Goals Indicators (Philippines)

Goal 1 : ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

PROPORTION OF POPULATION BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINE					
1991	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006
45.3	40.6	33.0	33.0	30.4	32.9

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB)

1991 and 1994-Based on old poverty methodology which uses region-base menus, special rice, regional prices and changing FE/TBE ratio. Data are disaggregated by region.

1997-2003 - Based on newly approved provincial poverty methodology which uses region-base menus, provincial prices, ordinary rice and

PROPORTION OF POPULATION BELOW NATIONAL SUBSISTENCE			
1991	1997	2000	2003
24.3	17.0	15.8	13.8

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB)

PROPORTION OF FAMILIES BELOW NATIONAL SUBSISTENCE [FOOD] THRESHOLD			
1991	1997	2000	2003
20.4	13.6	12.3	10.4

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB)

PREVALENCE OF UNDERWEIGHT CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE (%)								
	1990	1992	1993	1996	1998	2001	2003	2005
0-5 YEARS OLD Underweight	34.5	34	29.9	30.8	32.0	30.6	26.9	24.6

Source: Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) - National Nutrition Survey

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal1.asp>

Goal 2 : ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

PROPORTION OF PUPILS STARTING GRADE 1 WHO REACHED GRADE 6/ COHORT SURVIVAL RATE																
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
69.7	68.7	68.4	67.5	66.5	67.2	68.0	68.7	69.8	69.3	67.2	69.1	72.4	71.8	71.3	70.0	73.4

Source: Department of Education

*refers to the proportion of enrollees at the beginning grade or year who reach the final grade or year at the end of the required number of years of study

PRIMARY COMPLETION RATE																	
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001*	2002*	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total				63.0	63.9	63.2	65.2	67.7	69.0	68.4	66.1	66.3	71.6	70.2	69.1	68.1	71.7

Source: Department of Education

*Revisions were due to DepEd latest data updates

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal2.asp>

Goal 3 : PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

RATIO OF GIRLS TO BOYS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Primary	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.01	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.98

Source: Department of Education (DepEd) for data on primary and secondary education and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for tertiary education data.

RATIO OF GIRLS TO BOYS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Secondary	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.07	1.08	1.08	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.08

Source: Department of Education (DepEd) for data on primary and secondary education and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for tertiary education data.

RATIO OF GIRLS TO BOYS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Tertiary	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	

Source: Department of Education (DepEd) for data on primary and secondary education and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for tertiary education data.

RATIO OF LITERATE FEMALES TO MALES OF 15-24 YEARS OLD

	1990	1994	2000	2003
Ratio	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.02

Source: National Statistics Office - 1990 data: Census of Population and Housing; 1994 data: Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS)

SHARE OF WOMEN IN WAGE EMPLOYMENT IN THE NON-AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
40.6	40.4	40.2	40.3	40.1	40.0	39.0	39.7	41.0	41.3	41.1	41.0	42.1	41.2	40.4	41.9	41.8

Source: National Statistics Office - Labor Force Survey

PROPORTION OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (%) (Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total			11.3	17.4	17.4	10.7	16.7	16.7	12.3	13.6	13.6	17.3	13.0	13.6	17.6
Senate	8.7	8.7	16.7	17.4	17.4	16.7	16.7	16.7	13.0	13.6	13.6	12.5	13.0	13.6	16.7
House of Representatives			10.7			10.0			12.3			17.8	17.8	17.8	17.7

Source: Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal3.asp>

Goal 4 : REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

PROPORTION OF POPULATION BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINE								
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1998	2003	2006
80	77	75	64	69	67	54.9	40	31

Source: National Statistics Office - 1998 and 2003 data: National Demographic and Health Survey; 1990 to 1995 data: TWG on Maternal and Child Mortality-National Statistical Coordination Board

INFANT MORTALITY RATE (per 1,000 live births)								
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1998	2003	2006
57	55	54	38	50	49	36	35	23

Source: National Statistics Office - 1998 and 2003 data: National Demographic and Health Survey; 1990 to 1995 data: TWG on Maternal and Child Mortality-National Statistical Coordination Board

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN UNDER 1-YEAR OLD IMMUNIZED AGAINST MEASLES (%)																
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
77.9	87.5	89.6	88.3	87.1	83.7	89.8	88.9	84.8	87.9	86.5	73.9	76.0	81.0	83.4	84.1	83.2

Source: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS)

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal4.asp>

Goal 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (per 100,000 live births)							
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1998	2006
209	203	197	209	186	180	172	162

Source: National Statistics Office - 1998 and 2000 data: National Demographic and Health Survey; 1990 to 1995 data: TWG on Maternal and Child Mortality-National Statistical Coordination Board

Regional Data

PROPORTION OF BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)																
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
58.8	59.7	59.4	60.0	60.9	62.7	64.1	65.0	69.2	69.5	69.0	69.1	67.0	60.0	63.0	68.4	70.4

Source: Department of Health
National Epidemiology Center/Philippine Health Statistics
(excludes traditional midwives)

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal5.asp>

Goal 6 : COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

CONDOM USE RATE OF THE CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE RATE (%)

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1.0	...	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.6

Source: National Statistics Office

1993 and 1998 data: National Demographic and Health Survey;

1995 to 1997 and 1999 to 2002 data: Family Planning Survey

CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE RATE

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
40.0	...	50.7	48.1	47.0	46.5	49.3	47.0	49.5	48.8	48.9	49.3	49.3	50.6

Source: National Statistics Office

1993 and 1998 data: National Demographic and Health Survey;

1995 to 1997 and 1999 to 2002 data: Family Planning Survey

PREVALENCE ASSOCIATED WITH MALARIA

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Prevalence	118.7	76.6	71.3	73.9	85.4	88.5	95.8	96.8	96.1	91.2	66.6	52.0	50.3	36.5	24.9	43.3	27.6

Source: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) for death rates and Philippine Health Statistics for prevalence rates

DEATH RATES ASSOCIATED WITH MALARIA

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Death Rates	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3

Source: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) for death rates and Philippine Health Statistics for prevalence rates

PREVALENCE ASSOCIATED WITH TUBERCULOSIS

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Prevalence	246.0	196.1	211.3	237.4	247.3	189.5	231.3	238.0	205.7	204.3	174.6	157.6	155.0	157.8	152.1	159.0	53.5

PrevalenceSource: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) for death rates and Philippine Health Statistics for prevalence rates

DEATH RATES ASSOCIATED WITH TUBERCULOSIS

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Death Rates	39.1	35.8	35.8	36.6	39.7	39.4	39.1	36.5	38.3	38.7	36.1	35.1	35.9	33.0

Source: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) for death rates and Philippine Health Statistics for prevalence rates

PROPORTION OF TUBERCULOSIS CASES DETECTED UNDER DIRECTLY OBSERVED TREATMENT SHORT COURSE (DOTS)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
53.0	56.0	61.0	70.0	73.0	63.0

Source: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) for death rates and Philippine Health Statistics for prevalence rates

PROPORTION OF TUBERCULOSIS CASES CURED UNDER DIRECTLY OBSERVED TREATMENT SHORT COURSE (DOTS)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
73.0	75.0	77.0	81.0	82.0	83.0

Source: Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center/Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) for death rates and Philippine Health Statistics for prevalence rates

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal6.asp>

Goal 7 : ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

PROPORTION OF LAND AREA COVERED BY FOREST (%)

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006
20.5	20.1	19.7	19.3	19.0	18.6	18.3	18.0	23.9	23.9	52.8	52.6

Source: Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources

For 1997 to 2002, an assessment of the current forest situation based on recent studies was undertaken in order to generate an updated statistics which was released in 2003.

Revised as of July 5, 2004 based on the submission of DENR, data posted earlier referred to proportion of area classified as forest.

PROPORTION OF AREA PROTECTED TO MAINTAIN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY TO TOTAL LAND AREA (%)

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	9.2	9.3	9.6	9.6	10.8	11.7	12.1	11.2	10.4	12.2	12.1	12.7	12.7

Source: Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau-Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Revisions were due to PAWB latest data updates.

CONSUMPTION OF OZONE-DEPLETING CFCS (ODP TONS)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
TOTAL	2981	2023	3520	3779	3959	3382	3039	2747	2130	2088	2905	2049	1644	1422	1516	1050	681

Source: Environmental Management Bureau-Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Revised as of July 5, 2004 based on the audited report as submitted by EMB.

*needs to be verified by an independent auditor to be conducted this June and expected to be completed by July 30, 2004.

PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO SAFE WATER SUPPLY (%)
No urban-rural disaggregation

1990	1998	1999	2000	2002	2004
73	78.1	81.4	79.1	80.0	80.2

Source: National Statistics Office - 1990-2000 data from census of Popn and Housing; 1998, 1999 and 2002 data from Annual Poverty Indicators Survey

PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH SANITARY TOILET FACILITY (%)

No urban-rural disaggregation

1990	1998	1999	2000	2002	2004
67.6	85.8	79.3	86.1	86.2	

Source: National Statistics Office - 1990-2000 data from census of Popn and Housing; 1998, 1999 and 2002 data from Annual Poverty Indicators Survey

PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO SECURE TENURE (owned and rented) (%)

	1990	2000
Proportion	91.0	81.2

Source: National Statistics Office - 1990 Census of Population and Housing

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal7.asp>

Source: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas - Selected Philippine Economic Indicators

Goal 8 : DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF 15-24 YEAR OLDS, BY SEX

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Both																		
Sexes	10.9	17.6	17.2	17.3	17.0	16.1	14.5	16.1	19.7	20.4	21.2	19.0	21.4	20.1	21.7	16.4	16.9	14.9
Male	7.7	15.2	15.2	15.2	14.8	14.4	12.7	14.6	18.3	19.0	19.8	16.6	19.7	18.3	19.1	14.9	15.9	13.9
Female	16.2	21.6	20.4	20.8	20.9	19.1	17.6	10.7	22.2	19.9	23.6	22.9	24.3	23.2	25.9	18.9	18.41	16.5

Source: National Statistics Office

Note: 1990-1996 data were based on the 1980 Census population projections; starting 1997, data were based on the 1995 census population projections.

TELEPHONE LINES SUBSCRIBERS PER 100 POPULATION

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Lines	1.5	1.3	1.4	2.2	1.7	2.4	4.7	8.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.0	8.7	8.1	7.8	7.8	8.3

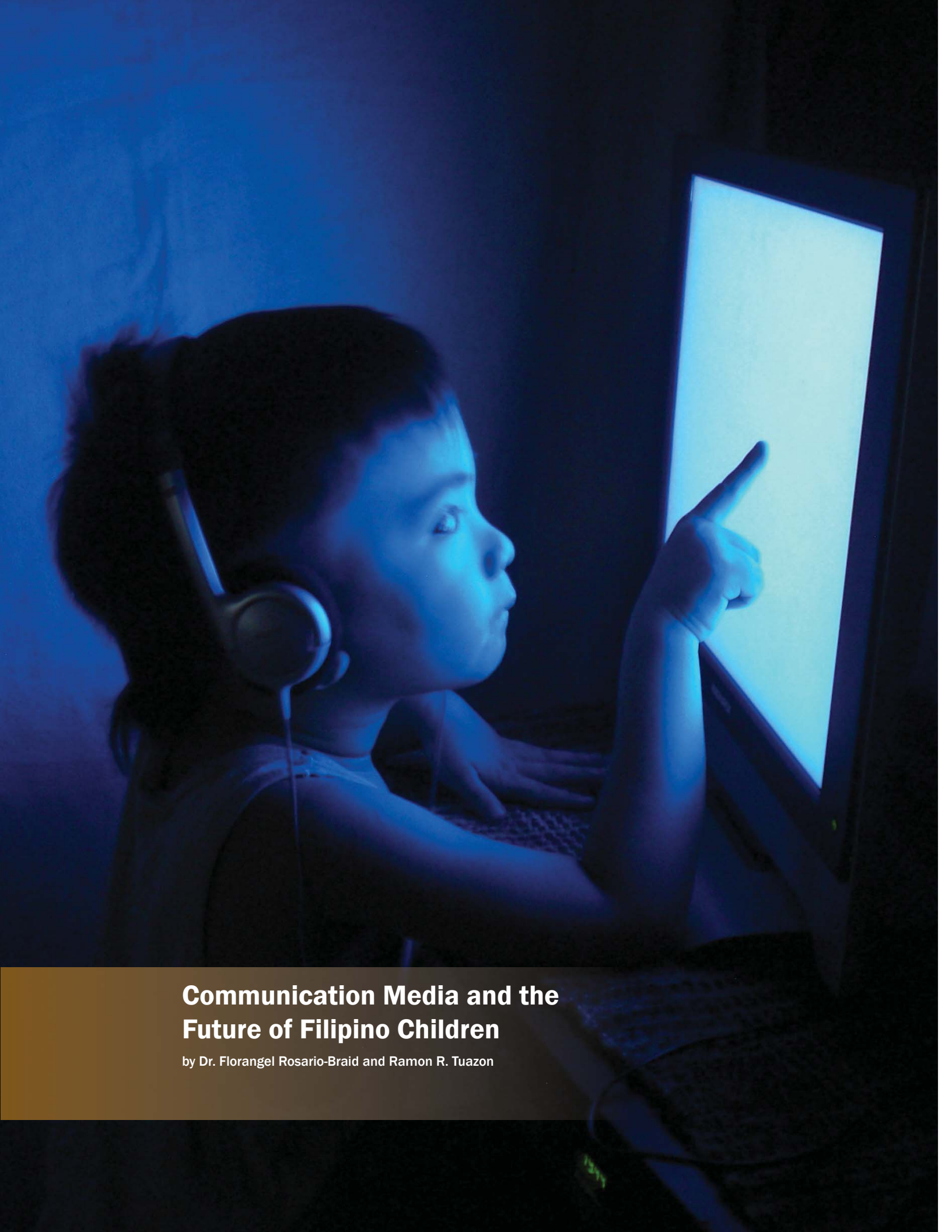
Source: National Telecommunications Commission

CELLULAR SUBSCRIBERS PER 100 POPULATION

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cellular Subscribers	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.3	1.9	2.4	3.8	8.5	15.6	19.4	27.8	39.9	41.3	49.3	

Source: National Telecommunications Commission

Source: NCSB <<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/goal8.asp>>



Communication Media and the Future of Filipino Children

by Dr. Florangel Rosario-Braid and Ramon R. Tuazon

Overview

The African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child,” suggests that a child’s socialization is best nurtured in a community, where parents, neighbors, other community members, and community-based institutions like the school and media reflect and reinforce the cultural values and practices of that community. It is in this environment that interaction, dialogue, and opportunity for participation in the life of the community are nurtured.

In this age of the Internet and social networking, it is the small media in the community that play a pivotal role in the development of the Filipino child. For despite the many benefits that a globalized communication media system brings, the community media hold the greater promise of fostering interpersonal connectivity to promote cooperation, creativity and critical thinking and to develop one’s own cultural and national identity.

This is the challenge in today’s Knowledge Society, where the communication media virtually dominate every major activity of children and youth – from play to leisure, family relations to schooling, socialization to education. Amidst the pervasive presence of big media, small community media provide the necessary counterpoint in helping shape the attitudes, beliefs, values and lifestyles of Filipino children.

The communication media landscape for today’s children and youth includes print, radio, television, video games, computers and the on-line technology of e-mail and various Internet applications such as social networking, blogs, chats, and user-generated content. The shape of this landscape, media-related issues on child development, trends in communication media and the scenario for the Filipino child, and policy and program recommendations are discussed in the sections that follow.

Overall, the general trends in communication as they relate to the future of Filipino children are as follows:

- Children today are participating more actively in generating information, initiating interaction with peer groups through social networking, and using the media more actively as sources of knowledge.
- Children are spending more time with the media than they do with formal school-related activities.
- Children are more discriminating about the choices of programs and information that they want from the media.
- The availability of more channels and program choices presents a challenge in media education and regulation.
- High costs of investments in media infrastructure and content will be a constraint in the development of socially-oriented programs which do not have much commercial value, as owners or investors are more interested in the return of their investment.
- Many of the values taught in schools are seldom supported by the values depicted in mainstream media.
- The growth of “citizen media” is a favorable trend as it encourages the participation of children and the youth in the production and dissemination of information. They now are both producers and consumers (“prosumers”). However, this trend should be accompanied by adherence to ethical standards. This has also implications in the relationship between professional journalists and citizen journalists.

Children of the Media: A Situationer

Findings of the 2006 McCann-Erickson Intergenerational Youth Study found that top leisure activities for teens after school remain to be traditional media, that is, watching TV and listening to the radio. However, there is an emerging prominence of technology-related activities like use of cellphones and Internet, indicating a growing interest and participation in the so-called technocentric life.

A. When Old is Still In: The Mass Media

Newspapers

Metro Manila has 30 dailies: 12 broadsheets, with nine in English and three in Chinese, and 18 tabloids (2007). These dailies claim a total circulation of over seven million (2005). About 150 community papers outside Metro Manila regularly come out weekly or daily. Newspapers were cited as one of the top three sources of knowledge and information in the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS). In terms of credibility, newspapers rank third, after television and radio, as a “more often credible” mass medium (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 2004).

Radio

Radio is a pervasive mass medium, with 86 percent of Philippine households owning radio sets. Nationwide, radio reaches 98 percent of the population. Radio stations nationwide total 993 (National Telecommunications Commission, 2007). As a source of knowledge and information, radio is one of the top three sources (2003 FLEMMS). In nine regions, it ranked number one. As a credible source, radio is considered “more often credible” by 35 percent, ranking higher than newspapers but lower than television.

Television

With 350 stations nationwide (NTC, 2007),

television is the most pervasive media channel. The 2004 4As Media Factbook showed TV household ownership as follows: Metro Manila (96%), Mega Manila (94%), Balance Luzon (77%), Visayas (86%), and Mindanao (83%). Television also was perceived as the most credible source of knowledge and information and overtook radio as the media channel providing the population with knowledge and information (2004 FLEMMS). Catering to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are The Filipino Channel of ABS-CBN and GMA Pinoy TV of GMA Network.

Cable Television

There are now 753 cable TV operators nationwide owned by more than 500 companies. Cable TV is enjoyed by 36 percent of 2.2 million homes in Metro Manila. For the 13.1 million homes with TV in Urban Philippines, only 26 percent have cable connection. Most programs on cable TV, however, are from foreign satellite channels, since not enough local programs are produced.

B. New Media, New Priorities

Personal Computers and Internet Access

The coming of the Cyber Age in the Philippines has also brought a “digital divide.” Only 7 percent of households owned personal computers, as of 2003 (FLEMMS). The 4As Media Factbook (2004) cited that computer ownership among households in Metro Manila was 17 percent and only 7 percent in Urban Philippines. Personal computer penetration is estimated at 1.9 for every 100 persons.

The Survey on Internet Access and Use by Filipino Children completed in October 2009 by the AIJC for UNICEF provides baseline data on the topic. The survey had over 900 schoolchildren respondents from Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. According to the study, Internet usage is 74 percent for all four areas, higher in both the Visayas area (90%) and Metro Manila (88%). The lowest incidence of usage is in Mindanao (47%). Majority of the non-users of Internet are female (55%), between nine to 12 years old (51%), are in grades

four to six (52%), and studying in the public schools (66%). This finding seems to indicate the existence of a digital divide. Reasons for not using the Internet centered mainly on the absence of Internet connection at home/school (61%) and computer illiteracy (51%).

Our schoolchildren are quite “late” users, as majority first used the Internet between 8 – 11 years old, with Metro Manila and Visayas children as early users (2-9 years old), compared to Luzon and Mindanao schoolchildren.

Internet cafes provide the venue for bridging the digital divide, as 8 of 10 Internet users access the Internet in Internet cafes. Grade-schoolers access the Internet more at home than in Internet cafes, perhaps because the former may be perceived by parents and guardians as safer and more secure. In contrast, high school boys go to Internet cafés probably because there are less restrictions and they are able to socialize more with their peer groups.

The Synovate Media Atlas study conducted nationwide from July 2008 to June 2009 reported that Internet access in the Philippines stands at 40 percent, with the younger segment as the highest at 60 percent. In the Greater Manila area, 46 percent of respondents have access. Data was gathered from 8,028 respondents aged between 15 and 64 across all socioeconomic groups.

An earlier related study conducted October-November 2008 is the Yahoo-Nielsen Net Index 2008. Covering 1,200 respondents with ages ranging from 10 to over 50 years old, from 22 major cities including Metro Manila, the study reported that children and young people are among the heavy Internet users with 50 percent in this age bracket accessing the Internet. Another heavy user is the 20 to 29 year-old bracket with 41 percent going online.

Online Social Networks

Online social networks present a new and growing environment wherein people exchange social information and manage impressions. It is a

form of Internet application that helps connect individuals online (Wikipedia 2006).

Friendster (www.friendster.com), the most popular social network service (SNS) in the Philippines, is estimated to be used by about 5 million Filipino, as of end 2005. There are over 58 million registered Friendster users worldwide. The biggest percentage of users in Asia is from the Philippines with 39 percent of the site traffic. Other social networks include Myspace, Livejournal, Multiply, and Facebook.

In the Social Media Study conducted by Universal McCann in March 2008 entitled Power to the People Wave 3, the Philippines leads the way with 83 percent of the people surveyed being a member of a social network, followed by 76 percent in both Hungary and Poland.

A high incidence (88%) of membership in online social networks was reported by respondents of the AIJC 2009 study. There is no difference among Mindanao (89%), Metro Manila (88%) and the Visayas (88%). Luzon respondents indicated the lowest (76%) incidence of membership, probably because being located in mountainous areas they have limited access to the Internet.

Blogging

Wikipedia defines blog as a “website where entries are written in chronological order and commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.” Blogging enables individuals to “publish” their own profile, thoughts, and opinions, among others.

According to LiveJournal, the Philippines ranks seventh among the top 15 countries where blog hosting is popularly used. There are presently 39,274 Filipino bloggers under this hosting site. Among 29 countries surveyed, the Philippines ranks second with 66 percent of Internet users writing a blog, or 42 million bloggers, next to China with 70 percent (Universal Media Study: Universal McCann Power to the People Wave 3 Report, 2008).

The 2009 AIJC study indicates that only a little over one-fourth (27%) of respondents indicated

they are writing blogs. The highest incidence was reported by Metro Manila (34%) and Luzon (32%). Mindanao respondents reported the lowest incidence at 8 percent. The low incidence of blogging is unfortunate as “responsible” blogging can have positive impact on child development, such as enhanced writing skills, reasoning, self-expression and even critical thinking. As expected, high school students blog more often than elementary students.

Online Gaming

According to the 2009 AIJC study, online gaming is another favorite with almost 8 of 10 elementary and high school students playing online games. This can be attributed to the visual and interactive characteristics of online games. There are more grade school pupils than high school students who play online. This is probably because high school respondents have other social activities besides playing online games. Surprisingly, there are more girls than boys in elementary playing online games, as the latter may have other social activities outside the house while girls may opt to play online at home. But as schoolchildren grow older, there are more boys than girls playing online. Incidence of online gaming is highest in Luzon and lowest in Mindanao. In Metro Manila, Visayas and Mindanao, more males play online games than females.

Joey Alaralla, founding president of the Asian Gaming Journalists Association, has observed that “teens and twenty-somethings tend to patronize online games more,” as reported by Ronald James Panis (2007). The same report noted that online gaming makes up 80 percent of the total Internet use in the country. Online gaming subscribers in the Philippines increased from 60,000 in 2003 to 350,000 in 2004. The International Data Corporation predicted that by 2009, there would be 6.9 million Filipino gamers!

Online Chatting

Schoolchildren (3 out of 5) also chat online with friends and family/relatives, as shown in the 2009 AIJC study. The highest incidence of chatting online is highest in Metro Manila and lowest in Mindanao.

Private school students chat more than their counterparts from public schools. Over one-third (37%) of online chatters chat two to three times a week. Fortunately, most do not chat with strangers, perhaps aware of the dangers of doing so. The high incidence of online chatting among elementary and high school students can be attributed to the availability of online chatting in many web applications. Online chatting is now facilitated by online games, chat rooms, instant messaging clients such as Yahoo Messenger, Google Talk, Skype, and Window Live Messenger.

Use of Wikipedia

Wikipedia is popular among elementary and high school students, and its use is more pronounced among the latter. A little over two-thirds (68%) of respondents of the AIJC survey are using the Wiki. It is used primarily for education purposes whether for school work or for research not related to schooling. The site complements textbooks and other print references. A possible reason for its popularity among students is ease in getting information on almost any topic, which makes doing assignments (research) less tedious. The online format makes it a better option than print – since online is visual and interactive.

Mobile or Cellular Phones

According to the NTC (2006), there are 42,868,911 cellular mobile telephone subscribers (CMTS). This number translates to a CMTS density of 49.29. PLDT President Napoleon Nazareno has forecast a 70 percent mobile penetration by 2010. Major cellular phone operators are SMART (17,201,005 subscribers) and Globe (16,659,742 subscribers). Other operators are Piltel (6,974,379), Digitel (2,000,000), Nextmobile (22,411), Extelcom (10,374), and CURE (1,000).

Short Messaging Service

Eighty-one percent (81%) of Filipinos aged 15 to 64 used short-message-service or SMS to communicate with one another, while the same group agreed that SMS has become an important form of communication to them, according to the

latest data from Synovate's Media Atlas study. A survey of Pulse Asia in 2003 showed that about 70 percent of texters sent as many as 10 messages a day, and another 13 percent sent more (11 to 20). On the whole, about 250 million text messages are sent per day by Filipinos. Of this number, 70 million text messages consist of the one-letter word, "K"!

Communication Media and Child Development

Both real-life and media-related activities affect the development of children. Child development specialist Feny de los Angeles-Bautista points out the essential elements in child development, which are growth and development in motor language, thinking, and social skills. Development from early childhood through adolescence involves the development of children's personalities, their sense of self and autonomy, their intelligence and ability to think, reason out and solve problems, and their values (undated report).

While much emphasis has been placed on the perils of exposure to both mass and new media, the generation of today is also on the winning end of the advances in technology worldwide. In cyberspace, children do as in the real world. they use computers for most of the activities of traditional childhood. That is, they play, socialize, communicate and learn in the course of their explorations (Bautista).

Cognitive Development

Liwag (2007) claimed that exposure to imagery in electronic technologies might have contributed to the selective increases in non-verbal intelligence scores during the past century. She cited the study by Flynn (1994) which compared the average scores of British respondents of comparable ages in the non-verbal test in 1942 versus 1992. The said test showed that there were significant increases for all age groups tested.

On the downside, Dr. Queena Lee-Chua of Ateneo de Manila University (2007) claimed that excessive TV watching is one reason why our youth cannot

focus well or sustain attention. She cited the 2004 study by Dr. Dmitri Christakis, a pediatrician at the Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Seattle. He found that kids aged one to three who watched TV or videos regularly faced a 10 percent increased risk in attention deficit problems when they reached age seven.

Adolescents as well are not immune to attention problems. Another recent study by the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York followed 700 children for a decade and found that 14-year-olds who watched TV for more than three hours daily were twice as likely not to finish school, compared to those who watched for less than an hour. Watching too much TV has made activities such as homework and reading more boring and more difficult for them. Chua-Lee (2007) stressed that increased "tuning out" by media-blunted brains of children is one factor in the growing epidemic of attention problems.

Meanwhile, the Youth Protection Roundtable Toolkit (YPRT) warns of Internet addiction especially among children and young people who are at risks of not being able to switch off the computer.

Socio-Emotional Development

Communication media have affected the social and emotional development of children and the youth. For example, how they relate to their parents and their peers are influenced largely by their exposure to these various media. Liwag (2007) cited that equality in online communication among computer users of all ages tends to erode authority structures. This development could mean that children now may be less accepting of parental authority.

As to social connections, the Internet has become an instrument to keep up and maintain relationships with close friends and close family members. However, it also creates virtual relationships with strangers and acquaintances, thus forming "weak ties" that provide less social support than real relationships with family and friends.

Charles J. Sykes in *The End of Privacy* (1999) warns of profound consequences for families of “way too much information” and end of privacy. Say Sykes:

The young are no longer the uninitiated or the innocent. They no longer have to pass through stages as they are socialized and introduced to the secrets of adulthood. All the veils are down. Any child who watches TV, author James Twitchell notes, ‘sees things that only adults would have known of in a pre-electronic world.’ On the Internet, they can find out about things that adults do that even many adults have never imagined.

Physical Growth and Child Development

The 2006 McCann-Erickson Intergenerational Youth Study underscored that technology has made an impact on the youth lifestyle, as indicated by a significant decline in 2005 in the young people’s involvement in physical activities like sports. Sedentary pursuits like watching television and playing computer games have become their preferred. These activities expose them to a number of physical risks including vision problems, seizures, hand injuries, and other musculo-skeletal complaints. Such sedentary activities have likewise been cited as a factor in the increasing number of obese children and adolescents.

Liwag (2007) cited recent studies that showed evidence that computers could have a negative impact on a child’s vision. She said that about 25 to 30 percent of computer-using children need corrective eyewear to work comfortably and safely at the computer. She added that “flicker frequencies” or quickly flashing images in some video games could also trigger seizures.

In a paper presented during the July 2007 Philippine Association of Nutrition (PAN) Conference, Ms. Anna Jacob noted that many adolescents are engaged in health-compromising behavior including poor food habits and a sedentary lifestyle. She said that long hours of study combined with sedentary hobbies such as playing computer games and watching television increase sedentary periods in the day.

Jacob’s observations were validated by Dr. Sioksoan Chan Cua. During the same forum, Chan Cua expressed concern over the growing prevalence of overweight and obesity as children in developing countries have been adopting a Western lifestyle characterized by decreased physical activity and over-consumption of energy-dense food.

In 1999, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement advising parents to limit their children’s time spent with media (no more than one to two hours a day) and to emphasize alternative activities such as sports and games, as well as imaginative play.

The World Wide Web also contains accessible information that may be physically harmful to children, e.g., websites promoting suicide, anorexia, etc. According to the Youth Protection Roundtable, with Web 2.0 and the increasing possibilities to publish user’s own content, the risk of being exposed to content inciting harm is growing.

Family Relations

Contrary to the popular notion that media consumption has eroded family relations, the latest research conducted by OMD Philippines showed that media technologies in fact have helped many Filipino households keep their families intact. A high 89 percent of respondents agreed that technology enabled them to remain in contact with other family members.

The study further showed that, with the emergence of a multi-tasking lifestyle, the Filipino family used 10.9 hours per day in the consumption of media and 14 hours in utilizing technology (OMD Philippines, 2007). About 4.8 hours were spent in surfing the Internet and 2.7 hours in watching television. Respondents also said that they spent more than 6 hours with their families and almost 2 hours with their friends. The rest of the day was spent for routine activities like sleeping, school or work.

Linking Disconnected Families

Some 10 percent of the country’s population

abroad of 8 million are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), with an average deployment of one million a year. The estimated total remittances from OFWs in 2008 is US\$ 15.7 billion

The 2003 Children and Families Study conducted by the CBCP Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Scalabrini Migration Center and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) reported the following findings:

- Parental absence created displacements, disruptions and changes in caregiving arrangements. The departure of one or both parents left an emotional mark on the young children left behind.
- In terms of socioeconomic variables, the children of migrants were markedly better off compared to the children of non-migrants.
- Among migrant families, family relations remained close not by presence but by constant communication. Access to instant communication helped bring family members together despite the distance.
- Access to communication technology played an important part in linking family members separated by distance.
- OFW families were twice more likely to have a landline telephone connection than non-OFW families (63% vs 29%).
- Some 94 percent of migrant families had cell phones, compared to 60 percent among non-migrant families.
- More than a third (35%) of OFW children had their own cell phones compared to only 12 percent among non-OFWs.
- Traditional ways of communication between migrants and the left-behind families, such as letters and cassette

tapes, have been replaced by the telephone and SMS or texting.

- Communication not only kept family members updated about what goes on in their daily life but also enabled parents to continue their parenting role.

Communication and Culture

Communication media is part of the broader cultural industries. Several communication theorists affirm the impact of media in shaping culture. Media is recognized as the harbinger of popular culture. One of the most common criticisms against media is that it abets “cultural homogenization.” At the global setting, the western media is perceived as the cultural yardstick particularly for values and lifestyles. At the national level, urban centers define what is “in” or “out.” With the advent of new media, especially cable and satellite television and the Internet coupled with economic globalization, the threat of a monoculture swallowing up the world’s diverse cultures seems to have become more real and urgent.

But technology is a doubled-edged sword. Local communities now have at their disposal the same technologies which will enable them to share to a worldwide audience their indigenous cultures. According to Thomas Friedman (The World is Flat), “uploading has made possible the globalization of the local,” or what another communication scholar calls “glocalization.” The Internet is a very powerful tool for the preservation and enhancement of cultural autonomy and particularity. The global media can also be a potent tool in promoting universally shared values which can bind people as global citizens.

The Right to Privacy

The advent of new ICTs has exacerbated the threat to the right to privacy, with the immense or almost unlimited capacity of new technologies such as computers to accumulate, store, process, retrieve and transmit personal and other data and information.

The emerging “Tell-All Society” is the result of a confluence of events. Modern technology has facilitated the development of expansive and intrusive databases that add seemingly harmless information, such as a demographic profile, to an individual’s credit worthiness, work experiences, and even political leanings. More and more government agencies, business companies, and other institutions like hospitals are automating their operations and in the process collecting unrestricted personal information. Likewise, the latest surveillance equipment and facilities are becoming more sophisticated, unobtrusive, powerful and intrusive. Examples are microphones that can pick up conversations from more than a mile away and global position satellites that can track movements especially when one uses a cell phone. Sykes (1999) wrote about Kindercams which allow parents to watch their child in the day care center over the Net and personal transponders implanted in animals (or individuals) now being marketed to enable parents to monitor the whereabouts of their children.

This seemingly growing disregard for privacy, however, can be self-inflicted. Note how thousands of individuals audition for the TV reality show Pinoy Big Brother that airs 24/7 every activity of the housemates. Sykes (1999) explains this phenomenon, thus:

Perhaps this is inevitable in a postmodern celebrity culture that has traded achievement for publicity; restraint for exposure; reticence for authenticity; and decency for self-revelation. Daytime television has become a national town hall of confession, peopled with a class of individuals willing to endure any humiliation or pay any price to escape their privacy. Unable to achieve fame through accomplishments or actual celebrity through other means, they offer their privacy as the kindling for their moment of pseudo-celebrity, especially on television.

Related to privacy are data persistence and data portability. The Youth Protection Roundtable (YPRT)

warned that children and youth are often not aware of the short-term and long-term consequences of published texts and pictures which they do not want to be publicly available later; but unfortunately it is difficult if not impossible to delete this information totally later on. Data portability refers to ease in transferring data deliberately stored on a server or platform to innumerable other servers; and in the process, people lose their privacy.

Many children and young people are also unmindful of the dangers or negative consequences of readily disclosing or sharing private information with the desire to be part of a network or community. Related is the problem of identity theft wherein some individuals intentionally use other people’s electronic identity for personal (and even criminal) gain.

ICT and Violence

Past studies have confirmed that continued exposure to violence on television desensitizes children to other people’s suffering. Numerous studies have also shown that watching violent television programs and films increases children and adults’ aggression and hostility. As early as 1970, a study of the US Surgeon General already reported that “TV encourages aggressive behavior among children.”

According to noted Filipino psychologist Dr. Lourdes Carandang (as cited in Braid and Tuazon, 1998), media exposure to violence, aggression and meaningless sexual activities stimulates aggressive impulses and therefore primes the child to act aggressively. For older children, the impact is more subtle and insidious. Even for adults, constant exposure can lead them to think that what they see is the natural state of things.

The popularity of computer games can be a reason for alarm, for it is plausible that playing violent computer games would have similar effects. Many computer games are equally violent and realistic. Research has also shown that playing such games desensitizes children to human pain.

Liwag (2007) cited a study which analyzed the Nintendo and Sega Genesis computer games. The results showed that nearly 80 percent of the games had aggression or violence as an objective. Liwag noted that while educational software for home computers included many games that encouraged positive, pro-social behaviors by rewarding players who cooperated or shared, the most popular entertainment software promoted competition and aggression. It was also noted that the amount of violence increased with each new generation of games (Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 1998).

Another study showed that playing a violent game, even for brief periods, had short-term transfer effects, such as increased aggression in children's free play, hostility to ambiguous questions, and aggressive thoughts (Subrahmanyam, 2004). In addition, children who preferred and played aggressive computer games demonstrated less pro-social behavior, such as helping someone (Liwag, 2007).

The top five favorite online games for Filipino schoolchildren according to the 2009 AIJC study, are Audition, Cabal Online, Ran/Ran Online, DOTA and Counter Strike. Audition is the top choice for Metro Manila where there are more girl children players. DOTA and Counter Strike, which feature violence, are in the top three in two survey areas.

Meanwhile, bullying which is a form of violence is becoming more prevalent. Mobile phones equipped with digital camera are used to take defamatory photos with the intention to share with as many individuals through MMS or to upload in the Internet.

ICT and Pornography

PREDA Foundation Inc. has warned that pornographic exploitation of children is growing at an extremely alarming rate, given the backdrop of poverty, sex trade and sex tourism, trafficking, advanced technology, and globalization. Recorded cases in the Philippines show that children aged 12 to 17 are common prey. However, some reports indicated that victims were even younger than age five. PREDA's advocacy paper estimated the

number of child sex workers as between 40,000 to 100,000.

While technology on the whole has been beneficial, it has also been used for less than noble purposes. Trinidad (2005) observed that advances in technology have allowed for the easier production, reproduction and dissemination of child pornographic images and consequently have made child victimization easier.

Pornography has indeed become widespread through the World Wide Web. It is estimated that some 40 percent of active websites host pornographic materials, with an estimated 260 million pages of pornography online as of July 2003. In a research study by the Crimes Against Children Research Center in the United States, 25 percent of respondents stated that they had been exposed to unwanted pornographic materials while surfing the Internet (Trinidad, 2005).

The 2006 Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later report (as cited by Philippine Daily Inquirer contributor Cathy Babao-Guballa, 2007) mentioned that approximately one in seven youth, aged 10 to 17 years old, received sexual solicitation over the Internet. The report also found that 34 percent received unwanted exposure to sexual material, such as pictures of naked people or people having sex.

The Internet has likewise become a venue for the widespread distribution of all kinds of pornography. Trinidad (2005) cited reports on pedophiles who used the Internet to communicate with fellow pedophiles, to locate like-minded individuals, to find children to abuse, to transfer and create child pornography, and to profit financially from such ventures.

Indeed, the danger for children does not only lie in their being recruited as models for lewd materials. The Internet has spawned a generation of children who are savvy in navigating their way through different Internet sites with ease and confidence. These children, who are the most vulnerable to be exposed to pornographic sites, may become desensitized to such images and consequently

become desensitized to sexual activity. Some researchers have suggested that childhood use of pornography may distort children's developing sexuality and encourage sexually abusive behavior in their adulthood.

The Internet has likewise been used as a digital highway for human trafficking. Information and transactions are sometimes processed through the Internet, although empirical studies are yet to establish this claim.

Social Technographics Profile

Early this year, Forrester Research introduced the concept of Social Technographics Profile (STP). Just as demographics describes the characteristics of populations and psychographics the psychographic characteristics of individuals, technographics focuses on technology behaviors and practices, particularly in relation to the various Internet applications such as blogging, social networking, uploading/ downloading video, contributing to wikis, and ratings and reviews (Li and Bernoff, 2008).

The STP categorizes individuals according to so-called groundswell activities (various Internet applications) in which they participate. Through the use of rungs on a ladder to visualize rankings, it places in the lowest rung the inactives, while in the highest rung are the creators.

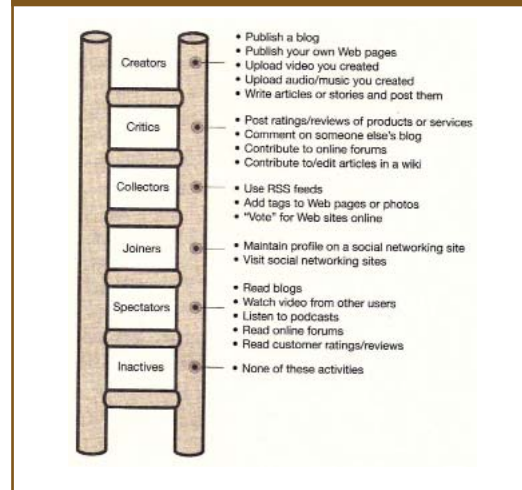
Initial STPs within countries and across continents show that children and young people occupy the higher rungs, compared to older people.

Megatrends in Communication Media

1. Media Convergence

The delivery of content and services was previously provided by several media, but today it is done by a single artifact, often networked computers and lately mobile phones. New generation mobile

Figure 1. The Social Technographics Ladder



phones have the following features: video (TV) and audio (radio) streaming, messages (SMS, MMS and e-mail), Internet access, camera for photo and video capture, and video gaming.

Friedman (2006) describes the trend as follows: "Convergence technologies challenge the boundaries that separate the once neatly divided territories of print, broadcast and telecommunications. This does not mean that this will lead to a world without borders, but probably to one with different boundaries and more cross-boundary work."

2. User-Generated Content

Media producers no longer have the power to dictate where, when, how and by whom their content is received. With the new technologies and available gizmos, today's media "consumers" or users, especially the young ones, now have other options aside from the big mass media providers. They can now source and repackage or produce their own content and patronize content produced by their peers.

Based on the 2009 AIJC Study, the incidence of uploading images and music is 71 percent and 69 percent, respectively, compared with downloading at 77 percent and 70 percent, respectively. In addition to being attractive to the techno-literate,

many uploading/download sites are very user-friendly even for young children. Friendster is the most frequently used site for uploading music and images, while YouTube is the choice for videos. On the other hand, IMEEM and MP3 are the favorite sites for downloading music; Friendster, Google and Yahoo for images; Y8.com and Yahoo for games; and YouTube and Lime Wire for videos.

3. Consumers as Prosumers

The latest technologies have allowed individuals, often young people, to produce their own TV shows or movies (posted on YouTube or Dailymotion), their own music or radio program (podcasts), and publications (blogs). Computers, videocams, digicams, mobiles, iPods, MP3s/4s, and such other gadgets allow consumers to produce their own sights and sounds. Now self-reliant in meeting their information and entertainment needs, such media consumers who are also content producers have been dubbed “prosumers”

ICTs and the new media have empowered and enhanced the independence of today’s children and youth. Adults can no longer, all the time, tell their children how to work things out. In some cases, children are the ones telling adults (parents) how to do things especially on the use of ICT. Now more than ever, children are given the power to make decisions (Who will you evict tonight on Pinoy Big Brother or Pinoy Dream Academy? Who will be the first Pinoy Idol?). At a young age, they are communicating and making decisions on their own.

The average age of first-time mobile users is six years old! The earliest known blog in the Philippines was made by 10-year old Lauren Dado in 1996.

4. Freedom of Expression

Very much related to the ability to produce their own content is the ability of children and young people to freely express themselves. For example, with blogs, children have a ready medium for expressing their views on diverse issues and topics with hardly any control by adults.

The free-wheeling nature of the new media is shown in the experience of four student bloggers of Quezon City High School who were ordered suspended for 10 days in January 2009 for posting an article in their blog <http://scientiaetvirtus.multiply.com> that allegedly contained articles and photographs against the school principal’s policies and person as well as the students’ gripes over irregular lunch hours and required subjects. According to news reports, the principal also ordered the closure of the school’s two student publications, Electron and Banyuhay while the student newspapers’ faculty adviser was also sacked from his position. The regional director of the Department of Education-National Capital Region eventually ordered the lifting of the suspension order.

In this relation, UNESCO in a 2008 document issued a reminder that with expanded freedom, there is the possibility that children and youth may still have little understanding of their ethical responsibilities. This is one of the reasons why UNESCO is pushing for media and information literacy for children.

5. Information Explosion and a Cluttered Media Environment

Children and youth today are exposed to an unlimited amount of information which can only be attributed to what Emily Abrera of McCann Erickson has described as “more media channels, more media options, and more media choices.” Because young consumers are now more occupied with so many things to do with so little time available, Abrera opined that it will be a constant struggle to get their attention. She described today’s young consumers as “empowered, informed, multi-taskers, impatient, hard to reach, attract and engage – or fool for that matter.”

The abundance of data and information makes it extremely challenging especially for young people to organize and process information. Children and young adults now need other competencies beyond the traditional 3Rs, i.e., reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic, which no longer suffice. Media and information literacy are the most important competency in today’s Knowledge Society.

6. Personal Image, Mobile Sociality and Solitary Mobility

Children and youth define their own image. On SNS, they create their own identities outside the confines of social status and physical appearances. The study by Garcia (2006) found that only heavy male users revealed more personal information over Friendster. Unlike their female counterparts, the heavy male users tried to project a desirable image of themselves through interesting write-ups and photos. The study further found that all user groups browsed through the profiles when seeking information about others online. More than anything else, they looked at the testimonials. All user groups considered photos contained in the profiles and testimonials as important in forming impressions of others.

Quoting from the blog of Alex de Carvalho, Abrera (2008) observed that individuals, especially children and young people, have two choices, i.e., Mobile Sociality or Solitary Mobility. One expresses his or her preference for solitary mobility by wearing headphones or “shielding acoustically from one’s environment, by building one’s own private sound bubble” to listen to music or a Podcast. On the other hand, one expresses preference for mobile sociality if he or she is equipped to connect with the world while on the move, through voice, SMS, MMS, e-mail, Internet access, etc.

7. Creative Expressions

New media do not only enable children and young people to express their views. They also provide them an additional channel or venue for expressing or displaying their creativity, innovativeness and even ingenuity.

For example, at a young age of 17, Charice Pempengco has been dubbed as the world’s top YouTube sensation. Her singing performance uploaded in the FalseVoice channel of YouTube in 2007 attracted worldwide attention. She was invited to perform in major broadcast companies in Sweden, Korea, United Kingdom and the United States where she guested in top shows such as the Ellen De Generes Show and Oprah Winfrey Show.

Charice has performed with such luminaries as Celine Dion, Andrea Bocelli, Michael Buble, Josh Groban, and Boz Scags. (<http://charicepempengco.com/bio/>)

Other Filipino artists now performing abroad and discovered through YouTube are Arnel Pineda of the band Journey and Erin and Roxanne.

8. Cross-Cultural Boundaries

With the new media has emerged a borderless world which has resulted in increased or even unlimited opportunities for interaction within communities and beyond cultural boundaries. Children can now directly communicate with other children across the world and know more about other cultures beyond what textbooks and movies can offer. Through peer-to-peer file sharing applications, cross-cultural communication becomes a daily reality. These young people do not only share or exchange music and images. They also exchange values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

9. Public-zenship (The Tell-All Society)

People, including the younger generation, seem to be less and less concerned with their privacy and even tend to enjoy sharing themselves with the outside world through reality broadcast shows, blogs, and social network sites (SNS) such as Friendster and Myspace and equipment such as camcorders and web cameras. “There is nothing that someone is not willing to reveal or share about his or herself” (Sykes, 1999). The 1998 movie *The Truman Show*, which is about a television show that chronicles and broadcasts every minute in the real life of the main character, is now a 24/7 reality.

Today, there are hundreds of websites chronicling 24/7 the daily lives of individuals to escape, what Sykes (1999) quoting Frederick Exley describes as, “the blank anonymity of life.” One of the most popular of these net-cams is the Jenny-cam chronicle, visited by some 10,000 customers who pay US\$15 to have a front seat in watching a day in the life of Jennifer Ringley.

But not all are on “cyber exhibitionism.” To Pinoy rap icon Francis Magalona, the web was part of his life support system during his unsuccessful “happy battle” against cancer. To chronicle his treatment for myelogenous leukemia, FrancisM, as he was fondly called by colleagues and fans, created and maintained his website “A Free Mind on <http://francismagalona.multiply.com>. He labelled his chronicle “happy battle,” the title of one of his albums released in 1996.

Make or Break is a regular radio program aired over 102.7 FM. A listener calls the radio station which contacts the partner or love interest of the caller. The listener-caller talks to his or her partner on-air to discuss personal matters, usually love or marital problems. The latter is not aware that the conversation is being aired live and therefore listened to by thousands of radio listeners nationwide.

10. Emergence of a Visual Culture

“A farewell to Gutenberg’s world of scripture, a welcome to MTV’s world of vision?”

According to Naisbitt (2006, p. 113), there is an unprecedented visual assertiveness in the world today. It is an MTV world where visual narrative is overwhelming literary narrative. Naisbitt points to the decline in reading literacy worldwide with the rate of decline highest among children and young people compared with the adult population. Newspaper circulation has also been observed to be falling in many countries, a phenomenon Naisbitt refers to as the “slow death of the newspaper culture.” The world-renowned futurist attributes this decline to the emerging visual culture of MTV. The explosion in the visual and music world continues unabated with Internet applications (including YouTube and DailyMotion), new generation cell phones, multimedia players (MP3s and MP4s), and video games. Quoting University of Wisconsin Professor James Paul Gee, Naisbitt describes video games as “the major cultural activity of the generation 30 or 35 and below, the way movies and literature were for earlier generations.”

Part of the visual world is the use of color as part of political activism and social advocacies. According to Naisbitt, the first to use color for political campaigns in modern times was former president Corazon Aquino who used the color yellow. In Iran, pink was the color of dissent, blue in Belarus, yellow and pink in Kyrgyzstan, and rose in Georgia.

11. Print Media Still Supreme

The print medium continues to be the medium of choice, both for publications and advertising. According to Dominador Buhain, president of the Southeast Asian Nations Book Publishers Association, books and other printed matter still dominate the readers’ universe. “In the global setting, the print business is still 70 percent of the total, with digital accounting for the remaining 30 percent. We’re still on the traditional stage, and have not completely moved to the multimedia age just yet,” he said. (Ho, 2009)

It has also been pointed out that other forms of media did not actually compete with printed matter, particularly books. In the same article by Abigail Ho, National Book Development Board executive director Andrea Pasion-Flores said, “Consumers are different now, as compared with those from five or 10 years ago. They now consume various forms of content from different types of media.” Pasion-Flores cited research that showed that the more a person surfs the Internet, watches TV, movies and DVDs, the more he or she is likely to read books.

12. Citizen Journalism

Primetime news broadcasts now often include news reports not from regular network correspondents but from ordinary citizens. These contributions are either solicited or volunteered by individuals who happen to be in a place when a particular news event occurred. Some news networks encourage viewers or listeners to send in their news stories. The availability of new technologies particularly 3G cell phones and handycams makes it easy for citizens to be “journalists.” Some have decided to upload their “news stories” in the YouTube. Citizens’

participation in news reporting is now referred to as “citizen journalism.”

Blogging and podcasting are also other ways of “practicing” citizen journalism. Says Leo Magno, “In blogging and podcasting, we are seeing ordinary citizens reach out to millions without the need to operate or buy air time from broadcasting stations. We are seeing them create electronic magazines without the need to operate a printing press.” The Internet and other new media channels have expanded the court of public opinion. Blogging has become the “fifth estate.”

A raging debate is whether bloggers and podcasters can be considered journalists when they do not follow essential journalism principles such as verification, etc. The main issue is whether the advent of new media can lead to a redefinition of news and journalism.

With children and young people at the forefront of the new media revolution, it is likely that most of the practitioners of citizen journalism belong to this so-called Yahoo or Google Generation. A recent UNESCO document (2009) on media and information literacy noted that this generation does not accept that news and information should come from a daily newspaper or at set times from television and radio broadcasts. Rather, they expect to get information, news and entertainment when they want it and to share opinions, experiences and lifestyles through social networking sites.

The growth of “citizen media” is a favorable trend, as it encourages the participation of children and the youth in the production and dissemination of information. However, this trend should be accompanied by adherence to ethical standards. This also has implications in the relationship between professional journalists and citizen journalists,

13. New Jobs and Careers for the Google Generation

New media channels and applications also are providing new career options for the Google

Generation, i.e., digital media, multimedia, and computer animation, among others. Unlike their parents and other elders, they need not leave for abroad to work. They can do business (work) at home online through outsourcing schemes. Outsourcing may yet slow down the dis-integration of the nuclear Filipino family brought about by the unabated “wholesale migration” that started in the late 1980s. “Homesourcing” gives family members opportunities for more quality time to be together. In the US, about 23.5 million or 16 percent of the labor force work from home (Friedman, 2006).

14. New Media and “Schools of the Future”

The increasing number of out-of-school children and youth and young illiterates, kept out of school because of poverty, can now be brought back in the education loop through alternative learning systems (ALS) and alternative delivery modes (ADM) using ICT-based tools. Schooling is no longer the only option to get an education, as one can pursue lifelong learning with the home, workplace, worship place, and community centers as venues for education.

The school system can use ADM for children and young people such as street children, working children, the physically disadvantaged, etc., who cannot go through the traditional classroom setting. ADM is also ideal in communities affected by natural and man-made calamities such as conflict situations.

Most ALS and ADM interventions use communication media channels, such as radio and computers, for online learning.

15. Media and Information Literacy as Basic Competencies in the 21st century

“Media and information literacy” refers to a teaching and learning process and application of critical thinking to receiving and producing mass communication media. This implies knowledge of personal and social values, responsibilities relating to the ethical use of information, as well as participation in cultural dialogue and the maintenance of autonomy in a context where influences eroding that autonomy may

be particularly subtle. Media and information literacy may be summed up as being centered on five core competencies, referred to as the “5Cs”: comprehension, critical thinking, creativity, cross-cultural awareness, and citizenship.

“Media literacy is generally defined as the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts. This definition has been validated by a large majority of the respondents to the public consultation and by the members of the Media Literacy Expert Group.” (European Network on Information Literacy website)

“Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.” (Centre for Media Literacy website)

In teaching media and information literacy, teachers focus on engaging critically with information, developing analytical, organizational and evaluative skills, and problem solving and communication. They focus on the competencies that underlie intentional learning and that will allow critical engagement with future media content and form and emerging information and communication tools.

Scenario for the YouTube Generation

Communication media technology will continue to dominate political, economic and socio-cultural development. We are moving into the Knowledge Society, although no one can adequately describe its contours because of rapid and continuing technological changes. But the basic question remains: Will the new technologies lead to a better quality of life for our children?

As previous analyses of trends indicate, the impact of technological development could go either way – positive or negative. Communication

media technology is a double-edged sword which can be used either to serve the common good or to protect the interests of a few. Communication technology does not take its own course. There are determinant factors, such as communication policies (of government and business), economic climate (e.g., cost determines access to technology), political ideology (press freedom), and democratic pluralism (role of civil society, etc.). The presence or absence of specific policy and program “interventions” will determine the impact of communication technology on our children’s lives within the next two decades. Long-term consequences can be observed in these areas: individual privacy; family and community relations; lifestyles and workstyles; socioeconomic productivity; social equity (e.g., access to basic education and literacy, health, nutrition, other social services); culture, values and national identity; culture of peace; and political participation or democratic pluralism (see Table 1).

On the other hand, interventions needed are viewed as supportive of the common good and facilitative of the attainment and sustainability of children’s rights (see Table 2 for summary of these interventions and Part V of this Report for a detailed discussion).

Table 3 describes the environment of the Filipino child likely to develop within the next few years with and without these interventions. The scenario likely to happen with interventions constitutes our desired scenario.

Table 1. Selected Megatrends in Communication Media and Their Impact

	Megatrends	Impact Areas*
Technology (Format)	<p>Globalization</p> <p>Multimedia convergence (including mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures)</p> <p>Interactivity</p> <p>Channel explosion</p> <p>Demassification and decentralization of media (alternative media)</p> <p>Digital divide</p>	<p>Transborder flow of information</p> <p>Family and community relations (especially diaspora communities)</p> <p>Cultural homogenization or cultural diversity</p> <p>Technology and delivery of social services (education, health, nutrition, etc.)</p> <p>Lifestyles</p> <p>Workstyles, e.g., outsourcing, homesourcing</p> <p>Mobile sociality or solitary mobility</p> <p>Access to technology and information</p>
Content	<p>Information explosion</p> <p>Niche programming</p> <p>Emergence of visual culture</p> <p>User-generated content, including peer-to-peer sharing</p>	<p>Culture, values and national identity</p> <p>Cultural homogenization or cultural diversity</p> <p>Creative expressions</p> <p>Privacy or Tell-All Society</p> <p>Copyright and public domain information</p>
Process	<p>Children and youth as dominant media producers and consumers</p> <p>Citizen journalism</p> <p>Women-empowering media</p> <p>Alternative learning systems/ alternative delivery modes</p>	<p>Creative expressions</p> <p>Media and information literacy as basic competencies</p> <p>Freedom of expression and other forms of political participation</p> <p>Multimedia career options for children and youth</p>

* as they affect comprehensive child development

Table II. Selected Megatrends in Communication Media and Proposed Policy and Program Interventions

Megatrends	Policy/ Program Interventions
Information and channel explosion	<p>Use of mother tongue as language of learning and social interaction</p> <p>Right to Information Act</p> <p>Promotion of public domain information and free and open source software</p> <p>Public online networking subsidy</p> <p>Institutionalization of distance education</p> <p>Human resource development for curriculum developers and other facilitators of learning</p> <p>Conversion of government broadcast networks into a PBS</p> <p>Department of ICT</p> <p>Community e-Centers (telecenters)</p>
Niche programming (specialized channels)	<p>Distance education (including tele-medicine)</p> <p>Human resource development for planners of media programs for children</p>
Demassification and decentralization of mass media	<p>Community Media Incentives Act</p> <p>Community-based broadcasting</p> <p>Regional communication resource centers</p> <p>Community e-Centers</p>
Interactive media and convergence of technology	<p>Department of ICT</p>
Children and youth as dominant media audience/user	<p>Media and information literacy in formal and nonformal education</p> <p>Child rights sensitivity programming</p> <p>Development of multimedia content for children</p>
Women empowering media	<p>Gender-sensitivity programs for media</p> <p>Review and updating of women-related provisions of codes of ethics</p>
Continuing rise of NGOs	<p>Alternative Broadcast Program Development Fund</p> <p>Media relations and advocacy training</p> <p>Media watch (monitoring)</p> <p>Policy and program advocacy campaigns</p>
Globalization	<p>Alternative Broadcast Program Development Fund</p> <p>Media Education through guidelines, rather than outright censorship</p> <p>Communication Technology Planning and Evaluation Commission</p>

Table III. Findings and Recommendations: Communication Technology

Positive Trends	Scenarios	Program/Policy Options
<p>Information and channel explosion</p> <p>Demassification of media</p> <p>Specialized channels and niche programming</p> <p>Interactive multimedia technology</p> <p>Women in media empowerment</p> <p>Increase in the number of children's programs/messages</p> <p>Re-skilling and re-tooling of computer and telecommunication literate workforce</p> <p>Communication and information as "new age" profession; specialization further diversifies jobs</p> <p>Emergence of small to "mega" enterprises arising from telecommunications, computer and multimedia revolutions</p>	<p>Digitized newsroom</p> <p>Multimedia applications in lifestyle, workstyle, family and community relations, political participation, etc.</p> <p>Interactive multimedia channels where media users (audience) co-create product and services they need rather than depend on market supply</p> <p>Specialized channels and programming for special sectors</p> <p>Universal computer literacy</p> <p>"Digitization" of government offices, business establishments, hospitals, banks, etc.</p> <p>Global mass media complemented by community media</p> <p>Convergence of technology using wireless telecommunication</p> <p>Free flow and accessible information</p>	<p>Public online networking subsidy</p> <p>Community e-Centers</p> <p>Expansion of computerization program in all schools (especially public)</p> <p>Promotion of public domain information and free and open source software</p> <p>Institutionalization of distance education</p> <p>Human resource development for planners for media programs for children, curriculum developers and other facilitators of learning</p> <p>Conversion of government broadcast network into a Public Broadcasting System</p> <p>Creation of a Department of ICT</p>
Negative Trends	Scenarios	Program/Policy Options
<p>Urban and elite concentration of communication technology leading to lack of access by marginalized sectors (rural populace, urban/rural poor, etc.)</p> <p>Overdependence on technology in the workplace, home, leisure, etc.</p> <p>Excessive competition among growing number of actors in mass media and telecommunications sector.</p> <p>Dominance of sex and violence in media</p> <p>Excessive commercialism and consumerism of media content</p> <p>Slow pace in the indigenization of mass media and other cultural products, compared with onslaught of global (western) cultural products.</p>	<p>Computer or techno-illiterate and technophobic populace</p> <p>Inequitable economic and political structure between techno-poor and techno-rich societies</p> <p>Excessive commercialism and materialism in the global and national (local) mass media</p> <p>Information wars or extreme competition for information</p> <p>Global cultural homogenization</p> <p>Monitoring and greater citizens vigilance on excessive sex and violence on media</p> <p>Competition will force small players to close down</p>	<p>Expansion of Community e-Centers</p> <p>Expansion of community-based broadcasting</p> <p>Media and information literacy in formal and non-formal education</p> <p>Policies on socio-cultural aspects of mass media and information</p> <p>A comprehensive policy framework especially on new information technology and cable TV</p> <p>Policies on "rationing" of information highways and redesigning of rules both for commercial markets and information-poor communities</p> <p>Policy on use of filter software in various locations</p> <p>Laws on protection of children and women against cyber crimes, e.g., pornography, trafficking</p> <p>Restructuring of the National Council for Children's Television into National Council for Children's Media</p> <p>Policy on use of mother tongue as language of learning and social interaction</p>

Policy and Program Agenda

The time frame for the proposed policy and action agenda coincides with the development planning cycle of the national government and the UN system in the Philippines. The current Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) ends in 2010 and its successor plan will be for 2011-2016. The country programs of the World Bank and various UN agencies in the Philippines, including UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNESCO, have agreed to adopt this timetable.

It is hoped that some of the proposals included in this paper can be integrated in the succeeding MTPDP and country programs.

Immediate (Short-Term) Agenda (2009-2011)

A. Executive Action

- **Public Online Networking and Community e-Centers**

To democratize access to online (global) information networking, the national government (through the CICT) and local government units should expand but, at the same time, rationalize the introduction of Community e-Centers (telecenters) nationwide. Community e-Centers have the potential to serve as channels for producing, sharing and disseminating content on child rights and other child-related concerns. CeC operations have to be rationalized in terms of the following: local content development, capability building for CeC staff, and adoption and implementation of manual of operations and business plans.

- **Private Sector Involvement in Internet Deployment**

It has been suggested that a certain portion of income taxes of telecommunications companies should not be turned over to the government

but instead be converted into units of CeCs (Lallana, 2009). Telcos will deploy and manage the CeCs in marginalized communities similar to the SAS model adopted in the 1990s. But unlike SAS, telcos will not roll out voice but Internet service only. Telcos will develop a business model suitable for CeCs and determine the best technology option to roll out.

- **Alternative Content Development Fund**

Production costs for quality alternative programming is prohibitive, especially for independent and non-commercial producers. At the same time, revenues for such programs are not always adequate to cover costs.

Necessary to balance the influence of commercialism on mainstream media, alternative content is intended for both multimedia platforms and the broadcast industry. Content development initiatives should be given priority support vis-à-vis infrastructure development and capability building (training). Content development should focus on the use of public domain information, open content and open source software.

A common concern of Community e-Centers is the lack of access to content produced by development agencies from government and other sectors. Developing content is also constrained by the dominance of proprietary materials.

To encourage groups to continue producing alternative (content) programs, the government, in cooperation with the private sector, may provide either seed money or a counterpart fund for these independent products. Such a development fund may be needed until the appropriate environment for alternative programming is established or, in the case of broadcasting, a Public

Broadcasting System (PBS) is set up and becomes the regular channel for the airing of alternative programs.

The proposed development fund for broadcasting may be managed by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) through its Broadcast Arts Committee or the Cultural Center for the Philippines (CCP). For e-content, the CICT shall take the lead.

- **Institutionalization of Distance Education**

Various options can be identified to institutionalize distance education. Some do not need enabling legislation to facilitate the process.

First, universities and colleges should be encouraged to offer distance education similar to the UP Open University Program. But our schools should first invest in workforce training, self-learning module development, multimedia planning and production, monitoring and evaluation, etc. Some of them own and operate radio stations which could serve as the main learning delivery channel.

Because of the high cost of investment involved in distance education (especially with the use of broadcast, on-line computers, and telecom services), universities or colleges may opt to enter into consortium, joint programs, and the like.

More cable channels should be encouraged to offer educational broadcasting. Cable TV owners and their associations can closely link with academic institutions for a resource-sharing scheme.

Distance education can be further boosted if the government broadcast network (especially NBN Channel 4) is

converted into a Public Broadcasting System with education as one of its major mandates.

- **Media and Information Literacy Program in Schools**

Considering that children and the youth constitute the bulk of media users, a sustained and systematic media and information literacy program should be instituted in all elementary and high schools. Media and information literacy develops critical awareness among media users of the value and quality of media programs. It will enable users to identify media content which not only is of technical quality, but more important, helps develop appropriate values and behavior. Media and information literacy also includes enabling children and young adults to become socially responsible and ethical media producers.

Media literacy should empower children and the youth to demand or advocate for and produce content or programs which will promote their total development and meet their social, cultural, political and spiritual needs.

- **Community Learning Centers in Marginalized Communities**

Community learning centers (CLCs) can complement existing public schools by providing print and audiovisual materials. At present, the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) with LGUs has been setting up CLCs for out-of-school children, youth and even non-literate adults.

- **Promotion of Public Domain Information and Free and Open Source Software**

The CICT should adopt a program which will promote the use of public domain information (PDI) particularly those

related to child development and child rights. This program will complement the government's aggressive promotion of respect for copyright and other proprietary rights under the aegis of the Intellectual Property Office. Related to the promotion of PDI is the promotion of free and open source software (FOSS).

- **Universal Internet Access Policy**

The Philippines should adopt a Universal Internet Access Policy consistent with the WSIS goal of providing easy, affordable, and usable access to information goods and services that promote a just, democratic and inclusive society. Toward this end, we should also support the adoption of a "Broadband Bill of Rights" as proposed by the Center for Digital Democracy or CDC (see <http://www.democraticmedia.org/billofrights.html>) which includes the following ten principles: choice (open access regulations), non-discrimination, privacy, open systems, interoperability, public interest obligations, civic content, educational opportunities, children's programming, and digital divide.

B. Legislative Action

- **Proposed Laws on Child Pornography and Cyber Crimes**

The Philippines being a state party to both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography should immediately pass an anti-child pornography law. There are several bills filed in both houses of Congress defining what constitutes child pornography and

child abuse materials using various media formats.

These bills recognize that the advent of ICT has abetted pornography through new platforms such as mobile phones and digital cameras, pirated VCDs and DVDs, etc. The Internet further has facilitated the speedy production, possession and distribution of pornographic photos and videos.

- **Proposed Laws to Curb Sex and Violence in Mass Media, Cable TV, and Advertising**

Several bills have been filed in both houses of Congress that seek to limit excessive sex and violence in media and advertising. For example, Senate Bill 1351 seeks to limit exposure of children to violent programming on TV and cable system, while Senate Bill 2539 seeks to penalize advertising and media companies which exploit women and glorify sexual violence in advertisements. Senate Bill 2345 prohibits the public exhibition or display of obscene and/or distractive motion or still pictures along major thoroughfares.

- **Amendment to the National Council for Children's Television Mandate**

The Council's present mandate has been limited to television. With technological convergence and growing preference for new media channels among children, there is a need to amend the coverage of the law creating NCCTV. The aim is not for the Council to "regulate" new media channels but rather to promote the use of new media as platforms for child development and child participation through an appropriate incentive system.

- **Enactment of Privacy Law**

There is need for legislation related to the protection of privacy or a comprehensive data protection law that governs the collection, use and dissemination of personal information by both the public and private sectors

- **Creation of a Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)**

Existing executive offices in charge of communication/ information technology are engrossed in regulation and execution of policies, with very limited resources and efforts for long-range planning. The legislative branch (Congress), on the other hand, tends to develop laws with limited perspective (as they can be amended and replaced anyway). Considering that information and communication technology will be the driving force for economic growth in the 21st century, adequate attention should be focused on how best to plan for the use of new communication technology for development.

The proposed DICT should be part of the priority legislative agenda. The Department will focus on “cutting-edge issues” or those which impact on the setting up and utilization of the information superhighway. Among these issues are ownership, regulatory framework, technology convergence, transborder information flow, technology transfer, globalization and national security.

Another important function of the proposed Department is rationalization of technology transfer and monitoring and evaluation. The Department is envisioned to conduct technology assessment, including socio-cultural impact assessment, in addition to economic and technological considerations. This means

that the Department’s membership should be multidisciplinary.

- **Conversion of the Government Media Network into a Public Broadcasting System (PBS)**

A Public Broadcasting System (PBS) addresses the problem of high costs on investment in media infrastructure and provides the venue for socially-oriented programs which do not have much commercial value. The envisioned system will consist of the TV network (National Broadcasting Network) and a few radio stations (now under the Public Broadcasting System).

There have been efforts in the previous Congress to convert NBN into a PBS. However, the national government has opted to transform it into a government corporation instead. Several reasons were mentioned for this decision, foremost of which is that the government needs a strong information channel to reach out to the entire country for political stability. There is also fear that PBS is not financially viable.

What is needed is an independent and alternative channel. A government-owned and controlled network may not be able to adequately reflect the views and provide the information needs of the public and sectoral interest groups, as its responsibility is to first present the government’s stance.

But the long-term viability of a PBS needs further study in light of the communication technology revolution. There may be a need to “re-engineer” the structure of the traditional “monolithic” PBS and adopt the community-based broadcasting (CBB) concept. The national network is “demassified” or “decentralized” into a local PBS for more localized alternative programming

through UHF, VHF and even cable systems. New technologies can link these community-based stations with each other and to national and even global media, thus eliminating the danger of parochialism in content and outlook.

C. The Role of Family and Community

- **Parents as Responsible Internet Users**

Parents and other adults can only “guide” their children on responsible Internet use if they themselves have adequate digital literacy. Parents who are computer literate are more likely to encourage their children to enhance their IT skills and reap the benefits of the Internet. Parents and adults should endeavor to continuously upgrade their own digital literacy.

- **Reasonable Guidelines on the Use of the Internet**

Rule or guidelines on responsible use of the Internet can be agreed upon by parents (guardians) and children. For example, families can be encouraged to place computers in shared rooms (such as living rooms, dining rooms, offices or libraries), where children will not be isolated and will use the Internet with others around them. Also, schools and parents should teach children never to share personal information (name, address, telephone) online.

Parental “control” may still be a key in keeping very young children safe on the Internet. Parents, especially of elementary children, can impose time limitation and websites that can be visited by their children especially in home Internet use.

But guidelines on Internet use should recognize such rights as right of

expression and privacy of individuals including children. Guidelines should not lead to curtailment of creative expression by children.

The use of filtering or blocking software for Internet sites that contain unwanted content for children may be explored by schools, homes, and even public Internet cafes. However, no blocking system is foolproof, as even computer savvy children can find codes to break through filters.

- **Responsible Social Networking**

Adults should be reminded that when they create Friendster accounts for their underage children/siblings, they are teaching them to lie. (Note: Children must be at least 18 years old to have a Friendster account.) They should also be encouraged to check the websites that their children visit and be aware of the people that their children communicate with online.

- **Use of Filter Software**

Parents and guardians should consider the use of filter software that can protect children and young people from stumbling over or deliberately accessing harmful, illegal and inappropriate websites and online content. Filter software could be installed at the following locations: end-user’s PC, local server, Internet Service Provider, and proxy server-based Internet filtering service. According to the Youth Protection Roundtable Toolkit (YPRT), filter software is estimated to block about half of all websites with age inappropriate and violent content and slightly higher effectiveness for illegal content.

D. Non-Government Organizations Agenda

- **Media Relations and Advocacy Training**

Issues and concerns of NGOs and POs as well as their views on local and national issues are not well ventilated in media. NGOs are generally not public relations conscious and do not have access to mainstream media. NGOs and POs, especially those working for children's rights, need a capability-building seminar-workshop on media relations and advocacy.

Civil society organizations are no longer limited to traditional media – print and broadcast. New media channels have proven to be effective platforms for dialogue, advocacy and mobilization. There are websites and social network sites that can be tapped.

- **Media Watch, Policy and Program Advocacy**

Civil society organizations/ NGOs are effective advocacy and pressure groups in demanding quality media content or programming. Media managers can no longer ignore the impact of NGO lobbying on their corporate image and market share.

What are some of the “doables” for NGOs to sustain or enhance their growing influence? NGOs can launch advocacy campaigns for or against a media policy, content/ programming, personality, etc. which they think are inimical to the common good and the rights of the child in particular. NGOs have built a track record of success in such activities. NGOs should keep track of the legislative agenda of both houses of Congress, including those related to children and communication media.

NGOs can initiate media monitoring activities, including content analysis, to rate or even rank media organizations against previously set criteria. Results of broadcast monitoring can be the basis for the renewal of broadcast franchises.

NGOs can also help shape media policies. For example, the Gabriela Commission on Children and Family has prepared a set of guidelines for Child-Sensitive Handling and Coverage of Children's Cases, especially since cases of child prostitution, abuse, delinquency, etc. seem to be increasing and are regarded as “hot media items.”

- **Promotion of Public Domain Information**

NGOs and other sectors should support efforts in promoting public domain information and free and open source software discussed earlier.

E. Mass Media Sector

- **Child Rights-Sensitive Programming**

Media owners, producers and performers should be more sensitive to children's rights, as the media audience is now predominantly children and the youth. Sensitivity means not only providing more children-oriented programs but, more important, being sensitive in using language and visual images.

Aside from increasing CRC-related programs or content, media should also broaden access and participation of children and youth in various aspects of planning and programming. Sensitivity must also include protecting the rights of young media personalities who are engaged in a form of child labor.

F. Education Sector

- **Research on Socio-Cultural Impact of New Media on Children and Youth**

Local research in this area remains limited and therefore needs support and encouragement. Among the pioneers in studying socio-cultural impact are McCann Erickson, UP-CMC and AIJC. Communication research agencies and schools should conduct related research studies to generate substantial information needed for planning and decision making.

G. Other Sectors

- **Multimedia Content Development for Children**

Multimedia content development for children and by children should be encouraged and promoted. Among the incentives are awards to and recognition of outstanding (child-friendly) digital content, blogs and websites. An example is the Animated Flash Fiction Scriptwriting Contest of the Animation Council of the Philippines, Inc. in cooperation with the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines. Stories highlight the following themes: Filipino freedom from colonization, recognition of Filipino's cultural diversity, and promotion of the Philippine cultural heritage.

promote positive values for children. These programs may be produced individually by the NGOs or co-produced by a network of NGOs.

NGOs may be empowered to monitor and content analyze television programs to determine the number of violent scenes in these programs. TV stations would be graded according to their use of violent programs to attract audiences. The ranking should influence the renewal of licenses of TV stations.

In the US, Violence Watch has been organized to categorize the different instances of violence found in films, for better evaluation. Aside from instances of violence, other categorized caveats for young viewers include the following: scenes showing the use of drugs and alcohol; sex and nudity; profanities; and inordinately scary scenes.

Media and information literacy lessons should be integrated in relevant subjects or courses from the elementary level to college, to develop critical consciousness among media users.

Medium-Term Agenda (2012-2016)

A. Program and Project Options

- **Role of Non-Government Organizations**

NGOs, particularly those with media production capabilities, should seriously consider producing alternative broadcast materials (audio and video tapes) which

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The Partners

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC)

The Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication is one of the leading communication institutions in the country, making significant contributions in generating and sharing new knowledge in communication and development. It helps build desired communication environments, not only by providing training for communicators and journalists, but also by advocating policies and programs consistent with its philosophy of communication as a development resource

AIJC is a non-stock, non-profit organization committed to the management and utilization of information and communication for national development. Organized in 1980, the Institute was first envisioned to provide a journalism school for a new breed of journalists in the Philippines and Asia who are able to address development issues and concerns while remaining committed to the tenets of press freedom.

The Institute offers a graduate studies program for degrees in Master in Communication Management and Master in Journalism and is engaged in research and consultancy, professional development and continuing education (including online courses), development communication planning and management, and editorial and multimedia services.

Its consultancy outputs have been incorporated in milestone documents and institutionalized in development programs, including the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Supreme Court Blueprint for Action on Judicial Reform, Action Program for Judicial Reform, Philippine Agenda 21, Education for All Program, Literacy Coordinating Council Blueprint for Action, Country Program for Children, Philippines-UNESCO Country Program Document 2009-2011, and communication plans of various sustainable development programs.

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