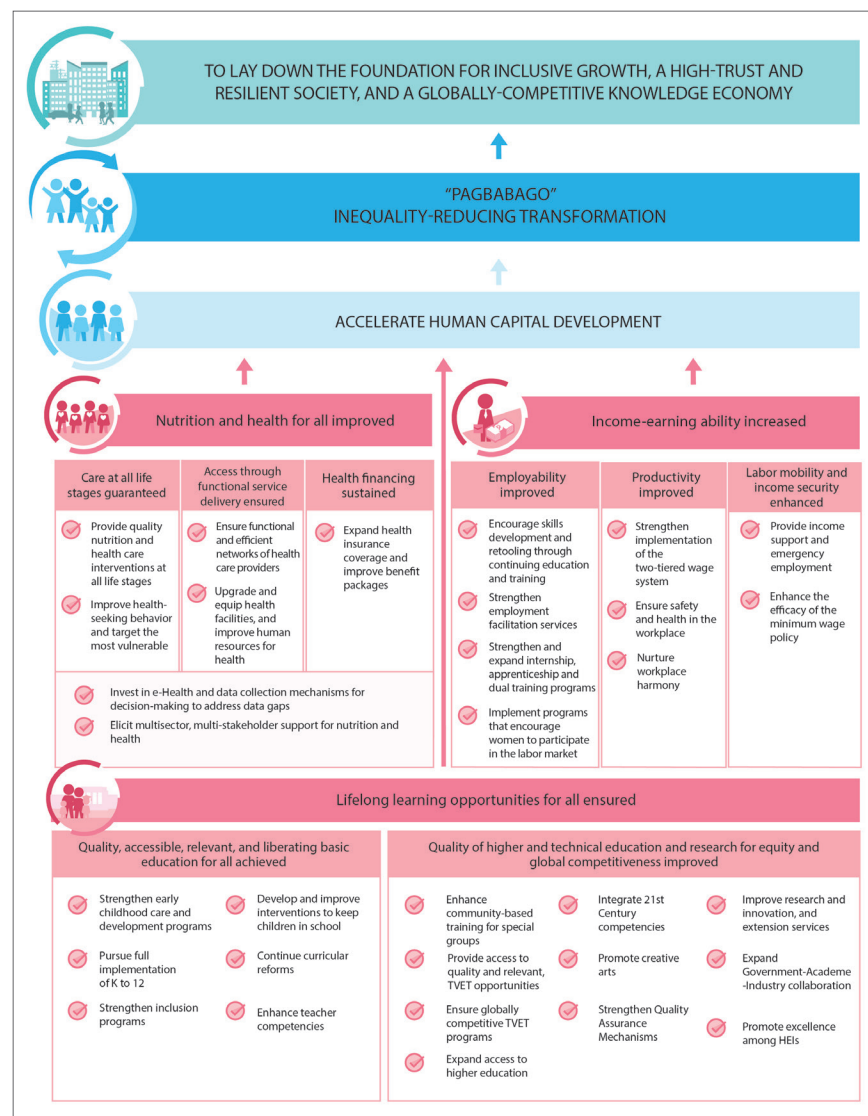


10 Accelerating Human Capital Development

Accelerating Human Capital Development

To reduce inequalities and provide equal opportunities for all, the government continues to prioritize programs and projects to improve human capital. Mixed results were observed for nutrition and health, and education sectors, while modest gains were experienced in the country's employment situation. As such, new priorities were identified along with inclusive strategies and other interventions to ensure that the sectors' challenges are addressed to (a) improve nutrition and health, (b) ensure lifelong learning opportunities, and (c) increase the income-earning ability of Filipinos (See Figure 10.1).

Figure 10.1 Strategic Framework to Accelerate Human Capital Development



Accomplishments

Improving nutrition and health for all

Sectoral plans to improve nutrition and health for all were formulated. These include the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition, Philippine Population Management Program Directional Plan, Philippine Strategic TB Elimination Plan Phase 1, AIDS Medium Term Plan, and the National Strategic Plan for the Control and Elimination of Malaria in the Philippines. Needs of vulnerable groups were also recognized through the Indigenous Peoples Health Strategic Plan and the Philippine Migrant Health Program.

Several issuances were also released in line with sectoral objectives. These include Executive Order (EO) No. 12 for the attainment of zero unmet need for modern family planning and EO No. 26 for smoke-free environments. Moreover, the temporary restraining order on the purchase and distribution of implants was lifted as the recertification of other family planning commodities was concluded, and the set of Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Law was revised.

Several initiatives were undertaken to enhance health information systems. The Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) initiated the Philippine Health Information Exchange (PHIE) in 2016.¹ The PHIE's focus was on creating a platform for interoperable health information system that streamlines the business processes and harmonizes the architecture, data structure, and technology solutions between DOH and PhilHealth. The DOH also spearheaded the drafting of the Philippine eHealth Strategic Framework and Plan that will effectively stimulate and establish the use of harmonized and relevant information and communications technologies to improve health care delivery, administration and management, and communicating health to Filipinos. Moreover, PhilHealth institutionalized the use of Electronic Medical Records for easier reimbursement to primary care health providers.²

The government collaborated with civil society organizations (CSOs) in health plan formulation, program planning, implementation, and research and development. CSOs actively participated in the discussion and implementation of several health programs with the government. For example, women health organizations formed part of the RPRH National Implementation Team that coordinates all efforts to effectively implement the law. The government also engaged with CSOs in implementing some health programs that are funded by development partners.

Researches and studies that would input into policy formulation and planning were also conducted with key stakeholders. New priorities for health research were identified through the National Unified Health Research Agenda (NUHRA) 2017-2022.³ Some of the researches and studies conducted that could input into policy formulation and planning include, among others, the validation studies on the Philippine Health Insurance Program, Damage Assessment Report on the Economic Consequences of Undernutrition in the Philippines, and the Longitudinal Cohort Study on the Filipino Girl and Boy Child.⁴

¹ DOH-DOST-PhilHealth Joint Administrative Order 2016-0001 "Implementation of the Philippine Health Information Exchange".

² PhilHealth Advisory No. 2016-0040 "Electronic Medical Record System".

³ There were six themes identified as new priorities under the NUHRA namely: responsive health systems, research to enhance and extend healthy lives, holistic approaches to health and wellness, health resiliency, global competitiveness and innovation in health, and research in equity and health.

⁴ The validation study on the Philippine Health Insurance Program is conducted by the UP-National Institutes of Health, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA); Damage Assessment Report on the Economic Consequences of Undernutrition in the Philippines by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), National Nutrition Council (NNC) and DOH; and the Longitudinal Cohort Study on the Filipino Girl and Boy Child by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and University of San Carlos.

Access to functional service delivery networks (SDNs) is continuously being improved. The DOH already created a technical working group that will establish and operationalize SDNs, including guidelines on redefining these networks. New directions for upgrading health facilities that promote rational allocation of investments and equitable access to health facilities were also crafted. However, issues on procurement with regard to construction and rehabilitation of facilities still remain a challenge. For 2016, only 31 percent out of the 2,704 facilities to be constructed and rehabilitated were completed. In 2017, none of the 904 target facilities was completed.

On human resources for health (HRH), there was an increase in the number of deployed health workers. A total of 23,836 HRH were deployed in 2016 compared to 18,067 in 2015, representing a 28 percent increase.⁵ These HRH continue to receive capacity building to improve provision of care. The trainings conducted by the DOH include Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care, Lifestyle-related Diseases Prevention, and Severe and Acute Malnutrition Management for Children, among others.

Child health outcomes improved. Infant and under-five mortality rates continued to decrease. The 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) showed that infant mortality rate decreased from 23 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013 to 21 in 2017. Under-five mortality also decreased from 31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013 to 27 in 2017.⁶

“Triple burden of disease”⁷ remains as a public health concern. Malaria prevalence declined from 7.7 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 6.45 in 2016. Data for the first half of 2017 showed that the total number of reported malaria cases decreased by 71 percent, to 501 from 1,744 cases in the first half of 2016. From the start of the National Malaria Control and Elimination Program in the early 1990s to 2017, 36 provinces were already declared malaria-free. In 2017, added to the list of malaria-free provinces were: Mountain Province, Nueva Vizcaya, Misamis Oriental, and South Cotabato.

Premature mortality attributed to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the age group 30-70 years old⁸ and death rate due to road traffic accidents increased. Data from the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system of the PSA showed that premature mortality due to NCDs rose from 168 to 310 per 100,000 in 2013 to 2015. Death rate due to road traffic accidents also increased from 8.9 to 10 per 100,000 in 2014 to 2015.

Furthermore, the problem of tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) persists despite efforts to address these. Tuberculosis incidence increased from 322 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 554 in 2016.⁹ However, the increase may be due to improved methodology applied in detecting TB cases and computing for TB incidence.¹⁰ The new methodology introduced by DOH used three new diagnostic tests¹¹ on sputum¹² collected from respondents, which are more sensitive and are faster in detecting the bacteria causing the disease and its drug resistance. For HIV/AIDS, the number of newly diagnosed HIV cases likewise increased, reaching 11,103 in 2017 or a

⁵ Breakdown of the 23,836 deployed HRH include: 442 doctors, 995 universal health care implementers, 16,703 nurses, 4,205 midwives, 441 medical technologists, 267 dentists, and 1,681 Public Health Associates.

⁶ These mortality rates cover a three-year period; 2017 rates cover 2013 to 2016.

⁷ Morbidity caused by infectious diseases and mortality by NCDs and emerging incidence of injuries, mental health, and alcohol and drug abuse.

⁸ Cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases.

⁹ According to the 2016 National Tuberculosis Prevalence Survey.

¹⁰ The Survey was conducted with the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development and the Foundation for the Advancement of Clinical Epidemiology, Inc.

¹¹ These diagnostic tests include: using light-emitting diode fluorescence microscopy (LED-FM), the Xpert MTB/RIF, and a solid culture for mycobacteria (2016 National Tuberculosis Prevalence Survey Presentation during the 24th Annual PhilCAT Convention, 2017).

¹² A mixture of saliva and mucus coughed up from the respiratory tract, typically as a result of infection or other disease and often examined microscopically to aid medical diagnosis.

20 percent increase from the previous year.¹³ This may be attributed to the HIV/AIDS advocacy campaigns of the DOH that encouraged the public to avail of free services offered under the HIV/sexually transmitted infections Prevention Program i.e., voluntary counselling and testing, and free antiretroviral therapy. Also made available was PhilHealth's Outpatient HIV/AIDS Treatment Package that reimburses HIV-positive patients up to ₱30,000 annually for treatment. Increase in the number of cases was observed among the most-at-risk populations with the highest prevalence among men who have sex with men at almost 57 percent of all cases in 2017. Similarly, an increase in the number of cases among the youth aged 15-24 years was observed from 2015 to 2017, where they comprised one-third of all the newly diagnosed cases.

On the provision of treatment for users of illegal drugs, positive gains were achieved. For 2016, around 3,580 or 97 percent of the 3,706 patients admitted in DOH facilities were able to receive complete drug rehabilitation treatment. In terms of illegal drug prevention, especially among the youth, the Department of Education (DepEd) plans to conduct random drug testing in public and private schools. The DepEd guidelines released in 2017¹⁴ spelled out the coverage, actual collection of biological samples, and intervention programs for those who will test positive.

The country continues to experience high levels of under-five children who are under- and overweight.¹⁵ Stunting¹⁶ also remains a concern that may contribute to a child's poor cognition and educational performance in the future.¹⁷

Total fertility decreased but rise in teenage pregnancy persists. The 2017 NDHS revealed that total fertility rate decreased from 3.0 births per woman in 2013 to 2.7 in 2017. The use of modern contraceptives among currently married women aged 15-49 increased from 37.6 percent in 2013 to 40.4 percent in 2017. In terms of teenage pregnancies, the 2017 NDHS also revealed that 9 percent of women aged 15-19 have already begun childbearing. However, data from the CRVS showed that there are girls who are giving birth as early as 10 years old. Trends in pregnancies among these younger group of girls (under 15 years old) have decreased from 1,986 cases in 2015 to 1,903 in 2016, but continues to be high and a persistent issue that needs to be addressed (*For detailed discussion on other issues on teenage pregnancies and reproductive health, refer to Chapter 13*).

Ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for all

Access to basic education of vulnerable groups was expanded. DepEd recognized 648 special education (SPED) centers and schools for children with disabilities and established additional 302 schools to serve indigenous learners.¹⁸ Meanwhile, enrollment in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) increased from 586,693 in school year (SY) 2015-2016 to almost 700,000 out-of-school youth and adults (397,002 males and 301,741 females) in SY 2016-2017. In addition, 2,500 Filipinos in Sabah also availed of ALS. There are also 36,000 children of overseas Filipinos enrolled in 40 Philippine Schools Overseas in 2017, up from 33,000 in 2016.¹⁹

Adjustments on the K to 12 curriculum were done to make basic education relevant. Twenty-first (21st)

¹³ DOH – Epidemiology Bureau, HIV/AIDS and ART Registry of the Philippines, December 2017.

¹⁴ DepEd Department Order No. 40, s. 2017.

¹⁵ ASEAN, European Union and UNICEF 2016 Regional Report on Nutrition Security in ASEAN Volume 1.

¹⁶ Stunting is a condition where the child's height is lower than that of a normal person of the same age and is measured using height-for-age as the index. (Food and Nutrition Research Institute, <http://philfsis.psa.gov.ph/index.php/id/16/meta/PCU>).

¹⁷ World Health Organization. (n.d.). Stunting in a nutshell. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/nutrition/healthygrowthproj_stunted_videos/en/

¹⁸ Data as of October 2017. Source: Briones, L. (2017). Seeing the Big Picture: DepEd Challenges and Direction [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.deped.gov.ph/education-summit-2017>.

¹⁹ Source: Commission on Filipino Overseas.

century skills were integrated in the curriculum, such as (a) Information, Media, and Technology Skills, (b) Learning and Innovation Skills, (c) Effective Communication Skills, and (d) Life and Career Skills. Aligned with this initiative, the DepEd established a technical working group to develop the financial literacy curriculum competencies and learning materials that will teach learners to plan, manage, and save money and resources. Further, schools were directed to strengthen the implementation of the National Drug Education Program²⁰ which includes integrating topics on illegal drugs in the curriculum.

Procurement reforms were introduced, but delays in the delivery of inputs were still experienced. The DepEd implemented measures to address procurement bottlenecks such as creating more bids and awards committees, retooling of budget and accounting personnel, conducting mid-year review of procurement plans, and streamlining of downloading of funds. These reforms contributed to the decrease in underspending from 27.17 percent in 2012 to 13.33 percent in 2016.

Delays in classroom construction and delivery of needed education inputs, however, persisted due to failure of bidding, market/industry limitations to meet DepEd's huge demands, and late downloading of funds.²¹ The lack of classrooms resulted in shifting class schedules, as junior high and senior high school (SHS) students had to share classrooms. Likewise, SHS students had to share learning materials because textbooks were unavailable or not delivered on time.

Preliminary data on SHS showed a marked decline in Grade 12 enrolment. The number of Grade 11 enrollees for SY 2017-2018 was almost the same as the enrollment in the previous school year. However, of the 1.5 million Grade 11 students in SY 2016-2017, only 1.2 million proceeded to Grade 12. Enrollment data per track showed that the academic track still has the biggest share of students (61%), followed by the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track (37%).

Table 10.1 Senior High School Enrollment: SYs 2016-2017 and 2017-2018

TRACK	SY 2016-2017*		SY 2017-2018**	
	GRADE 11	GRADE 12	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
Academic	925,019	757,237	875,661	757,237
Technical-Vocational-Livelihood	602,951	475,703	517,126	475,703
Sports	3,175	2,108	2,120	2,108
Arts and Design	5,901	4,707	5,158	4,707
Total	1,537,046	1,239,767	1,400,053	1,239,767

Notes:

* Data as of August 31, 2016

** Data as of November 28, 2017

Access to tertiary education was expanded. Latest data from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) showed that 211,776 students were awarded with scholarships, grants, and other financial assistance in academic year (AY) 2016-2017. The number of students receiving government support is expected to dramatically increase in AY 2017-2018 due to the 2017 General Appropriations Act (GAA) special budget provision for a free tuition policy in state universities and colleges (SUCs), where a total of 990,899 students from 111 SUCs benefited.²² To ensure continuity, Congress passed the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (Republic Act No. 10931). Unlike the special GAA provision for the free tuition policy in 2017, this landmark legislation provides for broader grants/modalities: (a) Free tuition and other school

²⁰ DepEd Memorandum 200 series 2016.

²¹ DepEd (2017). Understanding Underspending in DepEd (Issue 2).

²² Licuanan, P. (2017). Sustaining the Gains, Closing the Gaps. [PowerPoint Sides]. Retrieved from <http://www.deped.gov.ph/education-summit-2017>.

fees (including miscellaneous fees) for all Filipino students in SUCs, local universities and colleges, and state-run technical vocational institutions (TVIs) pursuing post-secondary studies; (b) Tertiary Education Subsidy to support cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof; and (c) National Student Loan Program for all Filipino students in private and public higher education institutions (HEIs). For 2018, ₱40 billion is provided under the GAA for the implementation of the law.

HEIs were supported during the K to 12 transition period (from SY 2016-2017 to SY 2020-2021), through various development programs and scholarships and research grants for faculty. The transition period was also seen as an opportunity to upgrade the qualification of HEI faculty and encourage research and development (R&D). Of the 4,000 CHED faculty and staff scholars currently supported for Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics (STEAM)-centered graduate studies both locally and abroad, 40 percent are under the K to 12 Transition Program. In terms of K to 12 Sectoral Engagement Grants, 22 percent and 10 percent of the 383 grantees since 2016 are in the information technology (IT) and Engineering disciplines, respectively.

Research and innovation productivity was promoted through the Philippine-California Advanced Research Institutes (PCARI) Project²³ and several R&D projects of CHED, SUCs, and Department of Science and Technology (DOST). As of 2017, the PCARI has provided 150 scholarships, supported 37 R&D projects, and enabled trainings and research partnerships in 18 HEIs with five leading research University of California campuses.²⁴ A Transnational Education partnership between CHED and the British Council was also launched in early 2018 to provide students and professionals with opportunities for internationally-recognized postgraduate qualification on niche disciplines that are currently not available in the Philippines.²⁵ Further, grants will be provided to displaced students and professionals in Marawi City taking up STEAM courses in undergraduate and postgraduate studies through DOST-Science Education Institute's *Bangon Marawi* Program on Science and Technology Human Resource Development²⁶ (*Refer to Chapter 14 for more discussion on other R&D initiatives of CHED, DOST, and SUCs*).

Arts, culture, and humanities education was promoted by education agencies. Training regulations and programs on digital creative arts (i.e., animation, game development) were developed and updated by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). In partnership with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), TESDA came up with training regulations related to the arts and crafts of indigenous people. CHED also partnered with NCCA for the first offering of “*Salikha* creative grants” for the fields of Fine and Applied Arts, Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences under the K to 12 Transition Program in 2017. Further, under the new General Education Curriculum starting June 2018, all college students will be required to take an “Arts Appreciation” course.

Special Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programs were established to cater to the socially excluded, displaced, and marginalized. Preliminary data²⁷ showed that TVET enrollees and graduates reached 2.25 million and 2.07 million, respectively.

Of these, training programs for socially excluded, displaced, and marginalized sectors were provided:

²³ PCARI Project aims to develop the capability of selected HEIs to undertake high-end research and to mobilize and translate knowledge into technological innovations. It focuses on addressing vital societal issues such as health, food security, energy, environmental quality, disaster mitigation, and others.

²⁴ Licuanan, P. (2017). Sustaining the Gains, Closing the Gaps. [PowerPoint Sides].

²⁵ British Council. (2018, February). Philippine-UK Transnational Education. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.ph/tne/about>

²⁶ DOST. (2018). DOST to grant scholarships to Students, S&T Professionals in Marawi. <http://www.dost.gov.ph/knowledge-resources/news/49-2018/1356-dost-to-grant-scholarship-to-students-s-t-professionals-in-marawi>.

²⁷ Data as of December 2017.

Table 10.2 Beneficiaries of TVET Special Programs

TVET PROGRAM	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
Skills Training for Drug-Dependent Surrenders	14,046 drug dependents trained and working with relevant agencies
Skills Training for Inmates	3,503 inmates
Emergency Training for Overseas Filipinos (OFs)	890 returning/repatriated OFs
Language and Culture Trainings for OFs*	Enrollment: 29,676 Graduates: 28,847
Onsite Skills Assessment for OFs**	Assessed: 537 Certified: 410
Barangay-based Trainings	1,043,078 applicants
Mobile Training Laboratories	Available to the 10 poorest provinces nationwide

Note:

*Data as of September 2017

**Data as of November 2017

TESDA continues to improve the delivery of competency assessment and certification to ensure quality of TVET graduates.²⁸ Certification rate increased from 91.3 percent in 2016 to 93 percent in 2017 due to the intensive industry consultations to ensure the responsiveness and quality of its 264 training regulations in 2017. Its training programs were also designed to meet the standards set by the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF).²⁹

Learner mobility policies are being enhanced. DepEd, CHED, TESDA, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) are currently benchmarking the PQF with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf), the region's common reference framework that allows ASEAN Member States (AMS) to compare the education qualifications with one another. In preparation for the impact of the fourth industrial revolution to the global economic growth and employment landscape, TESDA is proposing the creation of ASEAN TVET Development Council that will further intensify the cooperation among AMS toward the development of TVET sector. The Council aims for AMS to: (a) build a 21st Century Workforce; (b) develop globally-competitive and market-responsive skills sets; (c) ensure employability of the workforce; and (d) support the AQRf.³⁰

Increasing income-earning ability

With the robust growth performance of the economy, the country has moved closer toward its decent work agenda with modest gains observed in the country's employment situation.

The share of discouraged jobseekers³¹ to total unemployment rate declined. Reflective of the generally more positive outlook in the country's growth prospects, the share of discouraged jobseekers to total unemployment rate decreased to 11.6 percent in 2017 from the PDP baseline of 12.5 percent in 2014.

There were less unproductive and economically unutilized youths³² in 2017. The share of youth not in

²⁸ Mamondiong, G. (2017, December). Philippine TVET Updates and Direction. Presented at the 2017 Education Summit, Manila.

²⁹ Mamondiong, G. (2017, December). Philippine TVET Updates and Direction. Presented at the 2017 Education Summit, Manila.

³⁰ Mamondiong, G. (2017, December). Philippine TVET Updates and Direction. Presented at the 2017 Education Summit, Manila.

³¹ Discouraged jobseekers are persons who want a job and are currently available for work but who have given up any active search for work because they believe that they cannot find it.

³² Economically unutilized youths (age 15 to 24) are categorically different from child laborers (below the age of 18). The former pertains to out-of-

employment nor in education (NEE) decreased to 22.4 percent in 2017 from 22.7 percent in 2015. This is in line with the modest target range set (20.5 to 22.5 percent) for youth NEE in 2017.

Labor productivity growth³³ in the industry and services sectors increased. Labor productivity in industry registered an average growth of 4.8 percent³⁴ in the first three quarters of 2017 from a baseline of 3.4 percent growth in 2015. In the same period, labor productivity in services posted an average growth of 8.6 percent from a baseline of 4 percent growth. Among the government's initiatives to increase the country's labor productivity include the regular conduct of productivity trainings and orientations targeting micro, small, and medium enterprises.

Conducting career guidance advocacy campaigns, coaching, and counselling for overseas jobseekers were expanded. Orientation seminars for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and OFW-aspirants have been widely conducted. From January to October 2017, around 839,567 OFW-aspirants participated in mass-based and online pre-employment seminars. In the same period, pre-departure and post-arrival orientation seminars were also conducted for 499,909 OFW-aspirants and 401 OFWs, respectively. Other orientation seminars targeting specific sectors such as spouses or partners of foreign nationals and the youth have also been carried out. The number of participants in the Community Education Program, an information campaign on migration, increased to 11,309 individuals for the first ten months of 2017 from only 9,190 participants for full-year 2016. Moreover, agency-to-agency hiring services are continually being enhanced through e-Registration.³⁵

There were less economically-active persons in 2017. The labor force participation rate (LFPR) fell to 61.2 percent³⁶ driven by the decrease in the female LFPR for the period. Majority of those who dropped out of the labor force in 2017 cited assumption of household duties, school participation, and temporary illness or disability. While there have been predominant increase among females of child-bearing age who cited assumption of household duties for the period, there were almost equal share of male and female youths³⁷ who cited school participation as reason for not being in the labor force. The added years of schooling brought by the K to 12 Program may likely be the reason behind the increased or lengthened school participation of the youth for the period. However, the drop in Grades 11 and 12 enrollment in SY 2017-2018 is a reason for concern that warrants urgent government intervention.

Moving Forward

school youths and economically-idle persons and are encouraged to engage in legitimate work, while the latter is engaged in hazardous occupation. Child labor refers to any work or economic activity performed by a child that subjects him/her to any form of exploitation or is harmful to his/her health and safety or physical, mental, or psychosocial development. (See also Chapter 11)

³³ Preliminary estimates were derived by the NEDA Staff (Refer to Chapter 10 of the PDP Results Matrices 2017-2022).

³⁴ Preliminary data; NEDA Staff estimates only.

³⁵ The e-Registration system of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) is a single online registration facility for all types of applicant workers: government hires, agency hires (land-based and sea-based), and direct hires. Once registered, the OFW will have access to "my POEA" where they can receive alerts and notification on the status of his application and transactions with the POEA or his/her recruitment agency. The e-Registration database is where the Government Placement Branch sources its applicants for all its clients. Thus, if a jobseeker wants to apply to any of the employers/principals through the POEA government placement facility, he/she must register online through the e-Registration system.

³⁶ From 63.4 percent in 2016

³⁷ Youths are persons in the age bracket 15 to 24 based on PSA definition.

Improving nutrition and health for all

Amid accomplishments made in 2017, several critical issues and challenges remain to be addressed in improving nutrition and health for all Filipinos. These include: (a) unhealthy lifestyle and diet and poor health-seeking behavior that contribute to late detection of diseases; (b) increasing cases of communicable diseases (tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS); (c) weak and slow implementation of health interventions; (d) devolved set-up which makes the coordination of health programs difficult and the competing priorities of local chief executives that sometimes lead to low budgets and expenditures in the sector; (e) fragmentation in the delivery of primary, secondary, and tertiary care services due to non-functioning SDNs and weak referral systems; and (f) continued gaps in the health information system due to lack of interoperability.

Agencies involved in the sector have identified their priority programs and projects in the Public Investment Program for 2017-2022. To supplement these, the following strategies are recommended:

Table 10.3 Supplemental Strategies to Improve Nutrition and Health for All

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unhealthy lifestyle and diet and poor health-seeking behavior that contribute to late detection of diseases 	<p>Strengthen health advocacy campaigns, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ community-based or grassroots approach, where needs and goals will be identified by the people themselves. Develop more cohesive communication strategies. Focus on the benefits for the interventions for the first 1,000 days (exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding) and healthy diet and lifestyle. 	DOH, NNC, local government units (LGUs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in cases of communicable diseases (tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS) and weak and slow implementation of health interventions 	<p>Intensify provision/implementation of quality nutrition and health care interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass supportive policies such as the National Mental Health Care Services Delivery System, amendment to the HIV/AIDS Law, and the Universal Health Care Bill. Fast-track the implementation of new interventions such as the comprehensive sexuality education in the basic education curriculum through the finalization of the curriculum guide for teachers and drug prevention and treatment among the youth. Implement the return service requirements for HRH, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Institutionalize the HRH Network Philippines. Streamline and fast-track the procurement process and improve transparency in identifying targets in constructing and rehabilitating health facilities. Institutionalize health technology assessment that will determine the health services/benefits/entitlements to be provided for all Filipinos. Improve health system resiliency. 	DOH, LGUs

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolved set-up which makes the coordination of health programs difficult and the competing priorities of local chief executives that sometimes lead to low budgets and expenditures in the sector 	Improve technical skills of LGUs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the provision of technical assistance to local chief executives and health workers to enhance their health planning, programming, and monitoring and evaluation skills. • Expand programs like the Public Health Leadership Formation. 	DOH, LGUs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation in the delivery of primary, secondary, and tertiary care services due to non-functioning SDNs and weak referral systems 	Improve coordination within the health system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalize SDNs using new definitions and develop and adopt new standards. • Create province-wide networks of public and private health service providers with efficient referral mechanism and gatekeeping functions. 	DOH, LGUs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued gaps in the health information system due to lack of interoperability 	Increase investment and alignment in eHealth and data collection mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand existing health data systems, such as DOH's Field Health Services Information System to include private health facility data. • Provide capacity building to data collectors and processors to improve quality of administrative data. • Identify proper data warehouse, establish health data quality standards, and harmonize reporting mechanism. • Ensure that health research findings are used in decision-making. • Strengthen the internal capacity of the DOH in generating/producing high quality health studies and researches that will guide policy and decision making. 	DOH, LGUs, PSA

Ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for all

The implementation of various programs to improve access and quality of education remains a critical concern. The K to 12 and inclusion programs³⁸ faced difficulties such as: (a) shortage of qualified teachers, (b) lack of classrooms, laboratories, technical-vocational-livelihood equipment, and adaptive materials for persons with disabilities (PWDs), and (c) delayed delivery of teaching and learning materials. Further, a significant number of SHS students drop out of school, perhaps, due to financial constraints, family problems, and teenage pregnancy.³⁹ While recent laws and policies have made tertiary education more accessible, the sector continues to be challenged by financial sustainability and delivery of quality education. The changing employment landscape due to rapid technological innovation and ASEAN integration also emphasizes the need for the programs and trainings to align with international standards and industry needs. Moreover, delays in the processing of grants were also observed in the K to 12 Transition Program.

³⁸ Inclusion programs include special education, IP education, and alternative learning system.

³⁹ 2017 ADB Review Mission.

Table 10.4 Supplemental Strategies to Ensure Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of qualified teachers • Lack of classrooms, laboratories, technical-vocational-livelihood equipment, and adaptive materials for PWDs • Delayed delivery of teaching and learning materials 	<p>Strengthen monitoring of SHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a preliminary assessment of the different components of SHS curriculum, particularly the work immersion program, selection of track offering, teacher hiring and deployment, and procurement of learning materials. • Provide a tracking system for SHS graduates. • Improve procurement process and budget utilization to ensure that education inputs are delivered on-time. 	DepEd
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping children in school 	<p>Review and update current policies on inclusive education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design an ALS program for SHS dropouts and a certification mechanism that will allow completers to obtain a high school diploma. • Assess effectiveness of current alternative delivery modes (i.e., Enhanced Instructional Management for Parents, Community, and Teachers, Modified In-School/Off-School Approach, Open High School) and explore possibility of implementing these in SHS. 	DepEd
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial sustainability of tertiary education student financial assistance programs (StuFAPs) 	<p>Rationalize existing StuFAPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonize StuFAPs and grants-in-aid under the Free Higher Education or TVET and Tertiary Education Subsidy programs. <p>Redesign the National Student Loan Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the design of the loan program will be both sustainable and affordable. • Factor in viability and risk management, and set appropriate interest rates and repayment thresholds in formulating program designs. • Implement support interventions such as career guidance and financial counseling to assist student-borrowers, especially the poor, with regard to loan repayment issues while coping with the rigors of schooling. <p>Establish a learner information system to improve monitoring of higher education and TVET students and graduates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form an efficient tracking system of students and graduates to improve loan repayment collections. • Use data from the information system for more accurate planning and budgeting for the subsequent years of implementation of the program. <p>Strengthen monitoring and regulation of tuition and other school fees of SUCs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize fees and determine normative costs charged by SUCs to prevent possible overcharging and abusive increases in tuition and miscellaneous fees. 	<p>UniFAST Secretariat, CHED, TESDA</p> <p>CHED</p>

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the readiness of Higher and Technical Education Institutions to keep up with the changing education and employment landscape due to developments such as the ASEAN Integration and rapid technological innovation 	<p>Strengthen competitiveness in STEAM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade curricula and training standards that will encourage technology adoption and keep up with changing skills demand driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Support existing initiatives to modernize key sectors, such as the National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System and Program on Accelerating Farm School Establishment. 	CHED, TESDA
	<p>Maximize international collaborations to improve quality of instruction and foster research and innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize on existing global partnerships in the areas of research, training, and transnational education between Philippine HEIs, TVIs, and international universities and training institutions. Intensify efforts in engaging international talents and fellows, especially Filipino scientists who have been successful in research and development abroad, to delve into research and teaching in Philippine HEIs. 	CHED, TESDA
	<p>Boost Philippine HEI competitiveness in international university rankings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore mechanisms to encourage public HEIs to participate in assessments and surveys for global university rankings and international league tables. 	CHED
	<p>Implement a New General Education Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new general education curriculum⁴⁰ is targeted to be launched in June 2018⁴¹ to produce “thoughtful graduates imbued with values reflective of a humanist orientation, conscious of his/her identity as an individual, a Filipino, a member of the global community, and a steward of the environment”, thereby equipping them with the necessary skills to join the workforce and/or pursue further studies. 	CHED
	<p>Improve implementation of the K to 12 Transition Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen advocacy for undersubscribed programs (i.e. sectoral engagement, research grant) to increase interest and encourage HEI personnel to apply to these programs. Streamline processes to ensure that beneficiaries will not be encumbered. Monitor the reentry of HEI faculty to assess whether the gains from the program have translated into improvement in the quality of instruction. 	CHED
	<p>Intensify distance learning methods to promote retooling and continuing education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and expand open distance learning (i.e., TESDA Online Program, postgraduate distance education/open university, massive online open courses) to encourage continuing education, especially among OFs and workers requiring continuing professional development. 	TESDA, CHED

⁴⁰Core courses: Art appreciation; The Contemporary World; Mathematics in the Modern World; Science, Technology, and Society; Ethics; Readings in Philippine History; Purposive Communication; Understanding the Self.

⁴¹ Licuanan, P. (2017, December).

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
CROSSCUTTING STRATEGY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring delivery of quality education 	Implement/Operationalize the Philippine Qualifications Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop pathways, equivalencies, and system of credit transfer to provide access to qualifications and assist the movement of learners. Develop training regulations for qualifications for higher levels of technical education and skills development. Implement the Philippine Credit Transfer System, which is being developed to allow seamless transition across levels of education, by aligning the Philippine national standards to regional and international education systems. 	DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, PRC
	Strengthen partnership among government agencies, academe, and industry to achieve policy coherence, productive cost-sharing, pooling of resources, and improved accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize existing inter-agency and multistakeholder bodies to facilitate smooth school-to-work transition, ensure alignment of education curricula to industry needs, and encourage private support in the education sector. 	DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, DTI

Increasing income-earning ability

Despite significant gains in improving the quality of employment, the national unemployment rate reached 5.7 percent in 2017 from 5.5 percent in 2016, driven by the increase in youth unemployment. Aside from the still high number of youths-at-risk, other concerns requiring interventions in the near-term include: (a) graduating SHS students in 2018 which could drive youth unemployment and national unemployment rates upward; (b) unequal access to employment, with female LFPR remaining low; (c) changes in market conditions and potential domestic reforms which may impact key industries particularly, the Information Technology and Business Process Management (IT-BPM) sector; (d) uneven labor productivity growth; (e) tightening work and migration conditions overseas which may result in repatriation of OFs; (f) limited access to employment opportunities for those residing in areas outside of NCR (AONCR); (g) gaps in policies and programs to enhance income security of workers; and (h) operational constraints of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs).

Table 10.5 Supplemental Strategies to Increase the Income-earning Ability of Filipinos

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High number of youths-at-risk and youth unemployment 	Scale up target beneficiaries and expand program reach of the JobStart Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and resolve program challenges. Institutionalize Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs) with adequate employer base located outside Metro Manila. This will be a good starting point for expansion as the program will improve the delivery of employment facilitation services of the PESOs. Integrate life skills training component of the JobStart Program in the SHS Program to teach the values of professionalism and work appreciation among students. 	DOLE, DepEd, CHED, TESDA
	Refine work immersion programs designed to build confidence and cultivate sound work ethics of students.	DepEd, CHED, TESDA

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduating SHS students in 2018 which could drive youth unemployment and national unemployment rates upward 	<p>Redesign the Government Internship Program (GIP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make GIP ready for implementation anytime of the year. Craft internship manuals that will allow student interns in the public sector to undertake non-classified work engagements. Review Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules on public sector hiring to realign with the SHS Program and the Philippine Qualifications Framework Act. 	DOLE, CSC, LGUs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low female LFPR 	<p>Address constraints faced by women in the labor force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully implement the RPRH Law (See <i>Chapter 13</i>). Make childcare cost affordable and accessible by scaling up the implementation of day care facilities and services for children age 0-4, thereby achieving effective Gender and Development budget utilization. Address gendered norms in household/child-rearing care (e.g., encourage greater paternal roles in child-rearing). Encourage flexi-time arrangements (e.g., freelance/home-based/online work). Encourage future workforce to engage in the fields of STEAM.⁴² 	CHED, DOLE, DSWD, DOH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to sustain IT-BPM growth given the changing market conditions and potential domestic reforms (e.g., adoption of new technologies, rationalization of fiscal incentives on the IT-BPM industry, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify specific higher value-added services (with the participation of IT-BPM companies) to match Philippine skills and business strategies of the IT-BPM sector. Initiate knowledge transfer programs with overseas Filipino IT professionals with skills and network to capacitate local talents by facilitating entry of recruited professionals and by providing incentive packages for these professionals (See <i>Chapter 14 on science, technology and innovation (STI) priorities</i>). Reinforce STI programs in educational institutions and strengthen their industry collaboration, incorporating practical learning by providing incentives to schools that develop relevant internationally accepted programs and by liberalizing the provision of education services (See <i>Chapter 9 on Foreign Investment Negative List</i>). Align public service delivery supported by capacitating relevant national government agencies to be responsive to the market needs of higher value-added services through full automation of government processes and provision of highly specialized training for frontline agencies (See <i>Chapter 5 on e-Governance platforms</i>). Retool and complement private initiatives in re-training business process outsourcing employees to acquire higher value-added skills in the identified industries. Encourage expansion of voice services to other promising host LGUs and stimulate local start-ups by providing recognition and funding to deserving information and communications technology entrepreneurs. 	TESDA, DOLE, DOST, Department of Trade and Industry, and Department of Information and Communications Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited access to employment opportunities in AONCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve content of the PhilJobNet⁴³ and service delivery of PESO Employment Information System (PEIS)⁴⁴ to include present and future job openings originating from the private and public sectors. Intensify conduct of campaign awareness on PhilJobNet access so it can be utilized by jobseekers residing in AONCR. Intensify campaign awareness on the e-Registration System and streamline content to be user-friendly so it can be effectively accessed by jobseekers looking for work abroad. 	<p>DOLE, CSC, and Department of Public Works and Highways</p> <p>POEA</p>

⁴² Given global labor shortage in occupations relating to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and with women representing approximately half of the global population (not to mention being under-represented in these fields), there is need to consider the magnitude of untapped potential and talent and influential factors preventing girls from pursuing careers in STEM from the perspective of gender parity. Retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002315/231519e.pdf>

⁴³ The PhilJobNet is an online job and applicant matching system which aims to fast-track jobseekers' search for job and employers' search for manpower requirements.

⁴⁴ The PEIS captures jobseeker and establishment profiles as well as their vacancies, and regularly tracks the employment status of registered jobseekers in the system. The PEIS is mainly used by PESOs nationwide as a tool for monitoring major facilitation programs of the DOLE.

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uneven labor productivity growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase labor productivity through better education and training outcomes (i.e., stronger academe-industry linkage). Encourage students' competence in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Design and integrate modules on productivity improvements in the SHS Program and various HEI curricula, and engage educators and trainers who have successful track record on practicing productivity improvements in various fields and industry. Prioritize full employment for critical and high-skilled jobs by addressing reasons for occupational shortages (i.e., lack of worker competency, insufficient work experience, and deficiency in socioemotional skills). Encourage adoption of technology and innovation practices to make firms and workers perform better. Craft/design alternative productivity enhancement programs such as mainstreaming productivity action agenda in sectoral and development plans, including education and training development plans. Tap the country's reservoir of productivity advocates, practitioners, and experts to strengthen, accelerate, and deepen the deployment of productivity technologies at the enterprise level. 	<p>DepEd, CHED</p> <p>DOLE, National Wages and Productivity Commission</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tightening work and migration conditions overseas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen domestic reintegration through effective access of OFs to employment facilitation services (i.e., PhilJobnet, PEIS, and e-Registration) Strengthen bilateral and regional ties to diversify and explore prospective destination countries for OFs. Improve matching of OF skills for both domestic and overseas labor market opportunities. 	<p>DOLE, POEA, Department of Foreign Affairs, and National Reintegration Center for OFWs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in policies and programs to enhance income security of workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance income security of workers by designing and implementing an effective insurance targeting those who face sudden work displacement (See Chapter 11 on Employment Insurance). 	<p>DOLE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational constraints of the ASEAN MRAs⁴⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create/revise domestic policies, regulations, and processes to facilitate recognition of qualifications and expedite mobility of professionals anywhere in ASEAN. Create regulatory authorities and provide financial and technical resources to fulfill their growing and increasingly complex mandates. This will require appropriate government funding. Simplify recognition and registration process, such as promulgating clear qualification guidelines, sharing of databases in collecting data/information of professionals, and regulating the certification costs so it will not hamper professionals from utilizing the MRA systems. This will necessitate effective coordination between government agencies. 	
OTHER LEGISLATIVE AGENDA		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal access to employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize the enactment of the telecommuting bill to encourage flexi-time work arrangements. This is expected to promote inclusive employment opportunities for all in addressing the concerns of PWDs, people of advanced age, the underemployed, and other disadvantaged members of the society. Push the passage of the proposed "First-Time Jobseekers Assistance Act of 2017".⁴⁶ This will support first-time jobseekers by waiving fees and charges collected by various agencies for the issuance of pre-employment documents/requirements (i.e., Police Clearance, Birth Certificate, NBI Clearance, etc.). 	

⁴⁵ The Long Road Ahead: Status Report on the Implementation of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Professional Services. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/224101/long-road-ahead.pdf>

⁴⁶ House Bill Nos. 242 and 4362 and Senate Bill Nos. 1426, 343, and 313.