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International Labour Organization

# Decent Work for All

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DECENT WORK  
DECADE 2015

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## New ILO Manila Director backs job creation, decent and productive work in the Philippines

The new Director of the Country Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Manila says he supports the Philippine Government in its goal to promote decent and productive work.

"With the economic crisis we have seen the largest increase in unemployment since the Great Depression," said Mr Lawrence Jeff Johnson, the new Director. "The impact of the economic crisis on vulnerable employment and labour productivity means the number of workers living with their families in poverty is likely to have increased. We see workers living on the margin and at risk of falling further into poverty. As the economy recovers we need to look at employment policies and strategies to help create both decent and productive employment."

Mr Johnson spoke after witnessing the inauguration of President Benigno Simeon Aquino III. In his inaugural speech President Aquino said he would revive the emergency employment programme to provide jobs for local communities and help in the development of the economy. Referring to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), the President highlighted the goal of creating jobs at home so that there would be no need to look for employment abroad. President Aquino ordered relevant agencies to be even more responsive to the needs and welfare of OFWs.

President Aquino also cited the need to strengthen efforts to fund quality education, including vocational education for those who could not find decent work. The President said he would implement stable economic policies, level the playing field for investors and make government an enabler, not a hindrance to business.

Speaking after the ceremony Mr Johnson added that it was also important for the Philippines to find ways to increase productivity. "We believe that productivity and employment growth are the cornerstones of the fight against poverty," he said. "A highly trained and educated labour force combined with easy access to capital and technology can lead to a significant increase in productivity and help boost the country's economy. Dialogue with employers' and workers' organizations is also crucial."

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Young people line up everyday to apply for jobs in an export processing zone industry. (Photo by M. Rimando/ILO)

## Working together for Filipino youth

By Ruth Georget

*Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth* is a three year joint programme. The programme aims to improve policy coherence and implementation of youth, employment and migration initiatives through full stakeholder participation and increase access to decent work for poor young women and men. Funded by the Spanish Government through the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (MDG-F), the joint programme promotes solutions related to youth, employment and migration.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)

One year after its launch, the joint programme has carried out consultations in Antique, Masbate, Agusan Del Sur and Maguindanao, with gatherings reflecting decision maker and young people concerns on increasing drop-out rates amongst secondary school students. Consultations have also revealed a lack of decent work and employment opportunities for youth after graduation.

Teresa Soriano, DOLE Assistant Secretary, explained the prevailing sentiment that jobs were hard to find. A skills mismatch between industry

requirements and student competences contributed to decreased employment opportunities. She added that poverty in households forced young people to drop out of school to join informal labour markets. Young women, often confined to traditional roles of child-rearing and housekeeping, had problems completing secondary education, as did young men.

"With little chance for gainful employment, migration has become the choice for young people," added Teresita Manzala, Deputy Administrator of the National Reintegration Center under the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). She stated that while migration brought economic benefits, young migrant workers, especially women, exposed themselves to risks including exploitation and human trafficking.

With the DOLE Institute for Labor Studies and the National Youth Commission (NYC), project partners have begun to review policies, laws and local development plans on youth, employment and migration.

The project sponsors policy reviews and consultations among stakeholders including Filipino youth ages 15 to 24 years old to identify policies and programmes for newly-elected officials to adopt at national and local level.

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## Decent Work for All

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## EDITORIAL

# Towards decent and productive work

President Aquino, in his inaugural speech at the end of June, underscored the need to improve education, harness skills and “make government an enabler, not a hindrance to business to provide jobs for the people”. He highlighted the need to “create jobs in the country so that there (would) be no need to look for employment abroad”, with a call to be “responsive to the needs and welfare of overseas Filipino workers”.

A Spanish Government-funded project, Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth, managed by the ILO, together with IOM, UNICEF and UNFPA and with Department of Labor and Employment as lead implementing partner, is aligned with the new administration’s vision to improve the job outlook within the country, while caring for its migrants abroad.

In the Philippines, where half of the unemployed are in the 15 to 24 year old youth bracket, it is not surprising that many young people migrate. A lack of jobs and limited economic opportunities, compounded by conditions that are too often not decent nor productive for workers who have jobs, makes migration attractive. While migration brings economic benefits, it can also entail high social costs. Young workers outside the country expose themselves to risks and contribute to social breakdown.

In 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted new targets and indicators under Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). An employment target was added under MDG 1 for full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. Alternatives to Migration is one of the ways that the ILO is working towards assisting the Government meet MDG targets with employment and growth at the heart of economic policies, and targeted intervention that addresses both labour demand and supply.

In celebrating International Youth Day in 2010, the ILO acknowledges the potential of Filipino youth that can be harnessed for economic and social development. Through the project, the ILO shares a vision that acknowledges the critical role and voice of stakeholders including youth in developing a national action agenda on decent and productive employment for youth. The country’s agenda will pave the way for greater public and private partnerships and collaboration to improve access of young men and women to decent work, and educate youth on safe migration, vocational training, and entrepreneurship.

Lawrence Jeff Johnson  
Director

## Educational subsidies for disadvantaged youth

By Ruth Georget

Pahma Palti, an Overseas Filipina Worker (OFW), works as a seamstress in Jeddah. For many years, her family has relied on her remittances to live a decent life in Maguindanao.

Things changed when Mrs Palti’s developed a kidney ailment. She underwent dialysis, and while her employer supported her treatment, little was left from her salary to support her family. Her daughter Marisa, a sophomore in Sharif Aguak, was at risk of dropping out of school, all too common among children that OFWs leave in the Philippines.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in partnership with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Department of Education (DepEd), launched a secondary school education subsidy scheme for OFW children and disadvantaged youth.

The initiative is designed to help 250 youth, at risk of dropping out of secondary school for financial reasons. The scheme provides a monthly allowance for transport and food and other expenses targets participating public high schools in Masbate, Antique, Agusan del Sur and Maguindanao.

Educational subsidies are part of Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth, a project supported by the Spanish Government-funded MDG Achievement Fund and implemented

by IOM, ILO, UNICEF and UNFPA. The project operates in the Philippines where the secondary school drop out rate is close to eight per cent. Many parents cannot afford to send their children to school in a country where young people from poor families face pressure to contribute to family income.

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### Working together for Filipino Youth

The National Youth Commission (NYC), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Provincial Governments of Agusan del Sur, Antique, Masbate, and Maguindanao, employers’ and workers’ organizations, non-government and youth organizations are other partners.



ILO skills training for young people in Mindanao (Photo by G. Carreon/ILO)

# Youth unemployment at highest recorded level - ILO report; 36 million Asia Pacific young people unemployed – A possible “Lost generation”

The global unemployment rate for young people has risen to its highest recorded level, and is expected to continue increasing until the end of 2010, a new report issued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) says.

Youth unemployment stood at 13 percent globally at the end of 2009, equivalent to 81 million young people. That's an increase of 7.8 million since 2007, prior to the global crisis.

More than 36.4 million of these 15-24 year-olds were in Asia Pacific, home to 56 per cent (or approximately 350 million) of the global economically active youth population (of 620 million). When looked at by sub-region this means that at the end of 2009 there were 12.8 million unemployed young people in East Asia, 8.3 million in South-East Asia & the Pacific and 15.3 million in South Asia.

The peak of the crisis period (2008-9) also saw the largest annual increase in global youth unemployment ever recorded – a rise of one per cent. The crisis period also reversed the downward trend in youth unemployment that has been underway globally since 2002 and in Asia Pacific for five or more years.

Globally, the youth unemployment rate is expected to continue rising until the end of 2010 to reach 13.1, before falling back to 12.7 per cent in 2011. In South-East Asia & the Pacific the rate is expected to peak at 14.8 percent this year before falling to 14.6 per cent in 2011. In South Asia and East Asia the rates peaked in 2009 and the projected 2010 rates of 10.3 and 8.4 per cent are predicted to fall in 2011 to 9.8 and 8.1 per cent respectively. However, in South Asia, the report cautions that demographic trends are likely to mean job market pressures intensify, as an average of one million young people are expected to enter the labour market every year between 2010 and 2015.

The report, ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth August 2010, special issue on the impact of the global economic crisis on youth is being issued to coincide with the launch of the UN's International Youth Year.

The report warns of the “risk of a possible crisis legacy of a ‘lost generation’ comprised of young people who detach themselves completely from the labour market, having lost all hope of being able to work for a decent living”.

It also argues the true “lost generation” of youth will be the poor in developing countries. “As more young people remain (or enter) in poverty over the course of the crisis, the hope of a youth-driven push towards development in low-income countries remains stalled,” it says.

In many parts of Asia Pacific – and globally - young women faced more difficulty finding work than their male counterparts. The 2009 female youth unemployment rate for South-East Asia & the Pacific stood at 15.7 cent,

compared to 14 per cent for men. In South Asia it was 10.9 per cent for young women and 10.1 per cent for young men. Globally the rates were 13.2 for women and 12.9 for men. In only two geographical areas did women fare better, East Asia (7.4 per cent compared to 10.3 per cent for men) and the European Union.

The report also finds that youth unemployment has been more sensitive to the crisis than adult unemployment and the job market recovery for young men and women is likely to lag behind that of adults. Worldwide young people

are almost three times as likely as adults to be unemployed, but in 2009 in South East Asia & the Pacific the ratio was 4.6 – the worst in the world. In South Asia they are more than three times as likely to be unemployed and in East Asia 2.6 times.

The report also cautions that in developing countries youth unemployment figures do not give a full picture of the situation because young people cannot rely on family or the government to subsidize their job search and must take any available work to survive. One example cited is Cambodia, where many laid-off female garment factory workers have returned to family agricultural work.

Young people also suffer disproportionately from decent work deficits such as working poverty or poor employment status. The report estimates that 152 million young people, or about 28 percent of all the young workers in the world, worked but remained in extreme poverty (earning less than US\$1.25 per person per day) in 2008. In Bhutan the rate of working poverty among youth exceeds the adult rate by more than 10 percentage points, and in Viet Nam by more than five percentage points.

“Young people are the drivers of economic development in a country. If they can't realize their potential the entire society loses out;” said Sachiko Yamamoto, Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. “It may

seem costly to help young people who have given up hope of finding decent work - with a living wage, decent conditions and prospects for development - but not taking action is even more expensive because the investment in education is wasted, future tax revenue is lost and there will be pressure on social security and remedial services. So focusing national employment assistance measures on young people makes sense”.

“The Global Jobs Pact, which was unanimously adopted by the ILO's membership in 2009, includes a range of measures to help sustain youth employment, including incentives for job creation, skills development, income support, public works and youth entrepreneurship training. Many countries in Asia Pacific have already included these measures in their crisis responses,” she said.



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## New ILO Manila Director backs job creation, decent and productive work in the Philippines

Mr Johnson officially took over as the new Director of the ILO Country Office for the Philippines on July 1st following the retirement of Ms Linda Wirth. Mr Johnson joined the ILO in 1997. Before coming to Manila he served as Chief of the ILO Employment Trends Team, which produces major ILO reports including the annual Global Employment Trends and Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM). Mr Johnson also served as technical expert on the United Nations Inter-agency Expert Group for the Millennium Development Goals, and has longstanding experience as a consultant and expert working in

Africa, Central America, Caribbean, East Asia, Eastern and Central Europe, Middle East as well as in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

Mr Johnson is an expert on labour market indicators, trends and evaluation, employment and labour market policy and information, wages and earnings, and hours of work. Prior to joining the ILO, he spent more than ten years as a Labour Market Economist with the United States Department of Labor in Washington.

# YOUTHink: Voices of our Youth

By Ruth Georget

Representative Mong Palatino of the Kabataan Partylist gave an inspirational message during “YOUTHink” discussion series in June at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

Speaking before government, UN and international organization officials, experts, academe, media and youth groups, he asked, “Do we really understand Filipino youth today?”

Statistics often fail to contextualize what young people feel. In proposing solutions without listening to their needs and desires, we run the risk of alienating youth, he claimed.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the National Youth Commission (NYC) launched YOUTHink as a consultative mechanism to gather together young movers, shakers and leaders. YOUTHink provided a venue for them to voice views and plan policies and programmes that affect young Filipinos. The views are being incorporated in a workforce blueprint, “Decent Work and the Youth Labour Market: A Framework on Decent & Productive Employment for the Youth 2011-2016.”

Rep. Palatino shared his belief that a long-term solution to youth unemployment and the best alternative to migration was the strengthening of



Despite having a good education, young people in the Philippines are often 2-3 times more likely to find themselves unemployed as compared to adults. (Photo by M. Rimando/ILO)

the domestic economy. He added that the new administration should review economic policies to generate jobs, livelihood, and vibrant national industries to help fight poverty in the Philippines.

“There is always an expectation that something new is going to happen when a new leader emerges. But change is impossible to achieve if we do not assert the kind of change we want for our country. The challenge is to start working for the change we want, and the change we need,” exhorted Rep. Palatino.

## MUST READS



### Youth employment in the Philippines

The study prepared as part of a two-year ILO-Canadian International Development Agency Project on Promoting Youth Employment in the Philippines (PYEP), examines labour market trends over the past 20-year period and examines labour force participation and the distinctive aspects of youth employment and unemployment.



### Briefing guide: meeting youth employment policy and action challenges

The study, from the perspective of the Philippines, defines the basic terms and concepts used and differentiates the reasons for youth unemployment, both nationally and globally, before proceeding to a discussion of why there is a need to focus on this important area.



### Enhancing youth employability is a business mission

The author argues that the development of young people is a “national good” and that the business sector has an important role to play alongside formal educational institutions. Examples of outstanding corporate social responsibility programmes are provided as a means of demonstrating what is possible.



### Promoting youth employment in the Philippines: policy and action project. A final independent evaluation report

This report examines the ILO-CIDA youth employment project based on project assumptions, achievement of objectives, stakeholder buy-in and support, barriers encountered, gender criteria and the impact and benefits that accrued to the target group.



### Choosing and assessing local youth unemployment interventions

This working paper looks at the cost-effectiveness of various programmes that address youth unemployment. The author disaggregates the youth segment from total unemployment and examines the two classes of unemployment – voluntary and involuntary – and their causes. Current public sector interventions are assessed.



### Operations guide: managing an ILO-CIDA youth employment country project: Philippines

This companion study provides a guide to how the ILO-CIDA project was undertaken. Principles of project planning are discussed in detail along with the application of results-based management and logical frame analysis, used to identify and organize results.



### Towards a national policy and action agenda for decent and productive work for youth in the Philippines

The characteristics of youth who are not in the labour force are outlined and a broader discussion of the different segments of the youth labour market: analyzed the “choosy educated,” early breadwinners, farmhands, unskilled workers and the underemployed.



### Youth employability surveys in the Philippines: an integrative report

The ILO commissioned a survey of the youth situation among seven pilot areas of the country to provide a baseline of comprehensive and systematic gender disaggregated data. This paper summarizes the findings of the survey across different demographic areas and youth subgroups. It draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the future.