The Challenge

While the youth is supposed to serve as the most productive segment of the population, they comprise about half of the total three million unemployed population in the country (National Statistics Office [NSO], 2010). Of the 18.2 million young Filipinos aged 15-24, many remain trapped in vulnerable forms of employment just to survive another day.

The vulnerability of young workers is manifested by poor working conditions, inadequate salaries and even lack of social protection. They are left with no choice but to accept whatever job is available.

Even college graduates often face the challenge of finding work opportunities mainly due to job skills mismatch. This happens when their skills and knowledge do not fit the requirements of the labour market. The challenge is also worsened when young people are forced to work at the cost of dropping out of school to provide income for their poor families.

In addition, the lack of decent work opportunities has induced local and overseas migration among young Filipinos in search for economic alternatives. Studies show that most Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are between 20 and 24 years old. This shows that the youth have a significant contribution to the financial inflows related to migration.

The Response

Funded by the Government of Spain through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F), the Joint Programme on Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth, more commonly known as the Joint Programme on Youth Employment and Migration (YEM), is being implemented by United Nations (UN) Country Team agencies. The International Labour Organization (ILO) as lead UN agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are working with the Philippine Government to achieve a vision of having productive and competitive youth.

The joint programme aims to reach at least 10,000 disadvantaged Filipino youth in the provinces of Antique, Masbate, Agusan del Sur, and Maguindanao.

The programme highlights the importance of making decent work accessible. The quality and quantity of the work available are equally important when it comes to poverty reduction. Promoting access to education and skills development opportunities can help young people avoid vulnerable forms of employment and poverty.

Within the duration of the joint programme, the ILO would like to increase the access of the youth to decent work for the country to achieve inclusive growth.

Key Statistics

- Unemployment in the country is recorded at 7.4 per cent, youth unemployment rate is twice as much at 17.6 per cent.
- Of the estimated 3 million unemployed in the country, 50 per cent are youth.
- The Philippines is known to have a dominantly young population with 18 million between 15 and 24 years old.
- Among those who are employed, 33.3 per cent are in vulnerable forms of employment characterized by inadequate income, low productivity, and difficult conditions.
Outcomes

- Improved policy coherence and implementation on youth employment and migration through full stakeholder participation.
- Increased access to decent work for young women and men through public-private partnerships: more inclusive basic education and life skills, career guidance including safe migration, vocational training, and entrepreneurship.

Achievements

As of March 2012, the ILO has contributed the following to realize the outcomes of the Joint Programme:

- Drafted a national action agenda on youth employment and migration based on reviews of employment policies and recommendations from stakeholders.
- Completed training activities on empowering leaders in local economic development; policy development and analysis; project management; public finance management and resource generation that form part of the capacity building programme on local economic development for Local Government Units (LGUs). Each pilot province is expected to establish a local economic development team, craft policy paper and legislation on local economic development, incorporate programmes and projects on youth employment in local development plans and create a plan to improve the business environment. Capacity building programme is based on the capacities and training needs on local economic development of LGUs and local economy of four pilot provinces.
- Assessed the entrepreneurship potentials and technical vocational skills of disadvantaged youth in the four pilot provinces. Results served as bases in designing on-going technical vocational and entrepreneurship training. Out of 2,000 disadvantaged youth, 851 have completed technical vocational skills training and 81 youth are employed. Two hundred ninety out of the 400 target disadvantaged youth were trained on entrepreneurship using the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Entrepreneurship Programme of the ILO. Fifty nine youth with feasible business plans received starter kits to establish microenterprises.
- Seventy three partnership agreements forged to provide on-the-job training to disadvantaged youth undergoing technical vocational skills training. One hundred fifteen commitments made by public and private sector partners to provide post training services to disadvantaged youth undergoing entrepreneurship and technical vocational skills training.
- Eighty eight representatives of local organizations in four pilot provinces and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) were trained under the SIYB. They provide entrepreneurship training to the disadvantaged youth.
- Completed Trainer’s Guides and Workbooks on Generate Your Business (GYB) and Start Your Business (SYB) adapted for disadvantaged youth and translated these into local dialects.
- Signed a Memorandum of Agreement (through the ILO-International Training Centre) with the Department of Education (DepEd) to use Know About Business (KAB) modules as instructional materials on entrepreneurship under the Career Pathways-Technology and Livelihood Education (CP-TLE) Programme by public high schools. The programme was enriched with gender-sensitivity, life skills, and safe migration that was pilot tested in the project sites in partnership with DepEd. Entrepreneurship training was given to teachers, teacher trainers, and supervisors from four pilot provinces and 17 regions across the country. Meanwhile, 2,716 students were taught using the enriched first year level CP-TLE curriculum within the four pilot provinces.
- Assessed local employment services in the project provinces. Public Employment Service Office (PESO) Starter Kit was also developed in support of DOLE’s aim to make PESO as its key employment facilitation reform and to improve access to job opportunities. A training on basic employment services including Phil-JobNet, the labour market information portal of the Philippine Government, was also provided to DOLE and PESO representatives.

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Components

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UN Country Team agencies: ILO, IOM, UNFPA, and UNICEF
Project Sites: Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao, and Agusan del Sur

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