

# #RegionIV-AYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in CALABARZON<sup>1</sup>

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## Background

The paper provides a summary of key findings from the 2013 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS) study with particular focus on the various sexual and non-sexual risk behaviors, teen pregnancy and HIV-AIDS among youth living in Region IV-A.

The YAFS is a series of nationally representative cross-sectional surveys on the Filipino youth aged 15-24 conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) and the Demographic Research and Development Foundation (DRDF). The series includes surveys conducted in 1982, 1994 and 2002. YAFS is the only survey of young people that is nationally and regionally representative covering a wide range of topics of relevance to this significant segment of the population.

YAFS aims to provide updated information on a broad range of adolescent sexuality and reproductive health issues – its antecedents and manifestations which can be used in formulating intervention measures that will promote and safeguard the health and welfare of the youth. Largely quoted for its

findings on sexual and non-sexual risk behaviors and its determinants, the YAFS series is also rich on data regarding young people's educational trajectories, labor force participation, family relationships and the role of parents in their lives, attitudes and values, personal characteristics like self-esteem, and adverse conditions like suicidal ideation and depression symptoms. These are relevant to our understanding of today's young people.

The recent YAFS was conducted in 2013 with funding from the Australian Government, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Department of Health (DOH) and Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD). The **2013 YAFS or YAFS4**

interviewed a total of 19,178 young people representing all sectors including males and females, single and married and the Muslim youth.

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<sup>1</sup> Paper presented in the YAFS4 Regional Dissemination at the Provincial Capitol Ceremonial Hall, Trece Martires City, Cavite on 11 August 2014.

## Region IV-A Key Findings

### Socio-economic-demographic background

- Based on the 2010 Census, Region IV-A has a total of 2,396,690 youth ages 15-24. This constitutes about 13.3 percent of the Philippines' total youth population of 18 million. It has the second highest regional share of the country's youth next to NCR.
- While most of the youth have at least some high school education, 11.7 percent have no schooling or have at most an elementary education. Although the percentage of those studying (36.8%) is at par with the national's level, the proportion with some college education (17.8%) is below the national average (21.0%).
- Nearly 3 in 10 youth in the region are working, the second highest in the country.
- Unemployment among the youth (6.8%) is below the national average.
- More than one in ten youth are idle.
- More youth are in a live-in arrangement (10.2%) than in a formal union (9.5%) - a pattern consistent with the national figure. CALABARZON, however, has the third lowest proportion of youth who are in a live-in arrangement.
- CALABARZON youth are digitally wired. 87.3% own a cellular phone and 64.7% of them use the internet, own an email account or have a social networking account.

### Health and lifestyle

- More than 2 in 5 (43.5%) Region IV-A youth exercise at least two to three times a week which is below the national level.

- CALABARZON youth are high consumers of unhealthy foods and drinks.
  - 50.3 percent eat hamburger at least once a week, the second highest in the country
  - 57.4 percent eat fried chicken at least once a week, the third highest in the country
  - 62.3 percent consume fried street food at least once a week, the second highest in the country
  - 53.0 percent eat grilled street food at least once a week
  - 62.3 percent consume instant noodles at least once a week
  - 65.4 percent drink carbonated drinks at least once a week
  - 64.0 percent drink coffee/tea at least once a week

### Non-sexual risk behaviors

- CALABARZON has the fourth highest proportion of youth who are currently smoking (20.7%).
- The percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages (38.9%) is the fifth highest in the country.
- More than 3 in 100 youth have used drugs, which is below the national average.
- Between 2002 and 2013, the region's proportion of youth who ever thought of committing suicide decreased following the national pattern. Still, more than eight in 100 youth in the region have ever contemplated suicide.
- Similarly, the percentage who attempted to commit suicide decreased to 2.4 percent, placing below the national average.

- Considerable proportions of CALABARZON youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (24.9%) and as victims (18.4%).
- 4.3 percent of the region's youth have experienced harassment using technology.

### Sources of information about sex

- More than two in five do not have any source of information about sex.
- Friends of the same sex, medical professionals, and mothers are the most preferred sources of information about sex and reproduction.
- 53.5 percent of the youth reported that they can find help in school regarding sex-related problems, with their classmates as the leading source of such support.
- More than one in ten youth have discussed sex at home while growing up.
- Most discussions of sex at home are between fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters.

- Nearly 1 in 5 youth have visited websites with sexually-explicit content, the second highest in the country.
- Nearly three in ten have sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet, also the second highest in the country.
- Nearly 1 in 100 has recorded himself/herself having sex.
- More than 6 in 100 have engaged in phone sex, higher than the national level.
- More than 1 in 100 had sex with someone they met online or through text messages.

### Sexual risks

- More than one in three youth have sexual experience.
- Region IV-A youth engage in sex at young ages.
  - The mean age at first sex is 17.6 years for males and 18.1 years for females.
  - One in 50 youth had sex before age 15 while 1 in 4 had sex before age 18.

### Sex and media

- 45 percent of Region IV-A youth have read pornographic materials (60.8 percent among males and 30 percent among females), the second highest in the country after NCR.
- More than 3 in 5 youth have watched x-rated movies and videos (85.0 percent among males and 39.2 percent among females). Such proportion is also the fourth highest in the country.
- The youth also engage in other media-related sexual activities.

- Nearly 3 in 10 youth had engaged in sex before marriage which is below the national level.
- Seven in 10 first premarital sexual encounters are unprotected against unintended pregnancy and/or STIs. Condom is the most common method used among those who used some methods of contraception.
- There is low but above-national average level of commercial sex, most of which are unprotected. Among the youth in Region IV-A, 1.2 percent have paid for sex and 1.3 percent have received payment for sex in 2013.

- The youth have also engaged in other sexual activities with low level of protection against unintended pregnancy and STIs.
  - 6.7 percent of the youth have engaged in casual sex.
  - 4.1 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU (fuck buddies).
  - 6.3 percent of male youth have engaged in sex with a fellow male.
  - 2.9 percent of married youth (including those in living-in arrangement) have engaged in extramarital sex.

### Teenage fertility

- Increased teenage fertility in the past decade
  - 7.1 percent of females aged 15-19 are already mothers.
  - One percent of females aged 15-19 were pregnant with their first child at the time of the survey interview.
  - 8.1 percent of females aged 15-19 have begun childbearing.
- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing generally increases with age, i.e., from 2.0 percent among those aged 16 to 31.2 percent among those aged 19.
- Teenage fertility in Region IV-A is the lowest among all regions in the country.

### HIV-AIDS

- As of 2013, only 86.7 percent of Region IV-A's youth have heard of AIDS. Such proportion, however, is among the highest in the country.
- Misconceptions about HIV transmission are common among Region IV-A youth.
  - 69.2 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by having sex with only one uninfected partner who has no other sexual partners.
  - 59.3 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex.
  - 68.7 percent agree that a healthy-looking person can have HIV.
  - 64.2 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites.
  - 39.6 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected.
  - 42.7 percent think that AIDS is curable.
- Three in 4 youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS.



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