

# #RegionVIIIYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in Eastern Visayas<sup>1</sup>

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## Background

The region of Eastern Visayas has a total of 780,378 youth ages 15-24 as of 2010. This constitutes 4.3 percent of the Philippines' total youth population of 18 million. Despite the region's relatively low share to the national youth population, Region VIII remains to have a young population with 19.1 percent of its population in ages 15-24.

This 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 VIII.

The YAFS is a series of nationally representative cross-sectional surveys on the Filipino youth aged 15-24 conducted by the Demographic Research and Development Foundation (DRDF) and the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI). 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 fourth round of YAFS was conducted in 2013 with funding from the Australian Government through the 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 in Ormoc City, Leyte on 22 August 2014.

## Region VIII Key Findings from the 2013 YAFS

### ***Socio-economic-demographic background***

- About 3 in 4 youth in Eastern Visayas have never been married. More youth are in a live-in arrangement (19 %) than in a formal union (4.5 %) - a pattern consistent with the national figure. The proportion of youth who are formally married is the third lowest but the proportion living-in is the second highest in the country.
- More than one-third were studying in the three months prior to the survey.
- Most of the youth have at least some high school education (72 %) but the region has the second highest proportion of youth with less than high school education.
- One in five youth in the region is working, the fourth lowest in the country.
- 3.3 percent are working students which is below the national level.
- Unemployment among the youth (7 %) is below the national level.
- 13 percent are idle, i.e. they are neither studying nor working, the third highest in the country.

### ***Media, Lifestyle and Health***

- Region VIII youth are digitally wired. 66 % own a cellular phone and 42 % use the internet, 35 % have a social networking account, and 33.5 % own an email account.
- Almost three in four youth watch the television regularly.
- More than one in two Region VIII youth exercise at least two to three times a week – the fourth highest in the country.
- Region VIII youth are high consumers of unhealthy food and drink. At least once a week,
  - 22 % eat hamburger
  - 37 % eat fried chicken
  - 61 % consume instant noodles

- 35 % consume fried street food
- 47 % eat grilled street food
- 53 % drink carbonated drinks, the second lowest in the country
- 71 % drink coffee or tea

### ***Non-sexual risk behaviors***

- The proportion of Region VIII youth who are currently smoking (13.6 %) is the fourth lowest in the country.
- However, the percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages (42.7 %) is the third highest among all the regions in the country.
- Nearly 2 in 100 youth have used drugs, the third lowest proportion in the country.
- Eight percent of Region VIII youth have ever contemplated suicide which is below the national level.
- The percentage of youth who attempted to commit suicide (3 %), though slightly below the national level, has increased in the past decade in contrast with the national trajectory.
- Considerable proportions of Region VIII youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (13.5 %) and as victims (13.3 %). The proportions of aggressors and victims of violence are the second and fourth lowest in the country, respectively.
- Four percent of the region's youth have experienced harassment using technology.

### ***Sources of information about sex***

- Two in five of Region VIII youth 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.
- Half 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.

- Only seven in 100 youth have discussed the topic of sex at home while growing up.
- Most discussions of sex at home are between fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters.

### **Sex and media**

- 28.7 percent of Region VIII youth have read pornographic materials (26.8 percent among males and 30.8 percent among females), the third lowest in the country.
- 46.6 percent have watched x-rated movies and videos (59.8 percent among males and 32.6 percent among females), the second lowest among all regions in the country.
- The youth also engage in other media-related sexual activities.
  - 9 in 100 have visited websites with sexually-explicit content.
  - 19 in 100 have sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet, the fourth highest in the country.
  - One in 100 has recorded himself/herself having sex.
  - 3 in 100 had sex with someone they met online or through text messages.
  - Nearly 6 in 100 have engaged in phone sex.

### **Sexual risks**

- Nearly two in five youth in the region have sexual experience.
- Region VIII youth engage in sex at young ages.
  - The mean age at first sex is 18.0 years for males and 17.6 years for females.
  - 2 in 100 male youth and nearly 3 in 100 female youth had sex before age 15.
  - Nearly one in five male youth and more than one in four female youth had sex before age 18.

- One in four youth had engaged in sex before marriage, the third lowest in the country.
- 84.1 percent of first premarital sexual encounters are unprotected against unintended pregnancy and/or STIs. Condom is the most common method used by those who used some methods of contraception.
- There is a low level of commercial sex activities, most of which are unprotected. Among the youth in Region VIII, 1.1 percent have paid for sex and 0.6 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.
  - 4.4 percent of the youth have engaged in casual sex.
  - 1.8 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU (fuck buddies).
  - 3.6 percent of male youth have engaged in sex with a fellow male.
  - 0.3 percent of married youth (including those in living-in arrangement) have engaged in extramarital sex.

### **Teenage fertility**

- Decreased teenage fertility in the past decade.
  - 9.7 percent of females aged 15-19 are already mothers.
  - 2.1 percent of females aged 15-19 were pregnant with their first child at the time of the survey interview.
  - 11.8 percent of females aged 15-19 have begun childbearing.
- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing increases with age, i.e., from 2.0 percent among those aged 16 to 31.8 percent among those aged 19.
- The level of teenage fertility in Region VIII is the third lowest among all regions in the country.

## HIV-AIDS

- From near universal awareness of AIDS among the youth in Region VIII, only 73 percent of Region VIII youth have heard of AIDS in 2013, the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in the country.
- Misconceptions about HIV transmission are common among Region VIII youth.
  - 59.1 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.
  - 52.3 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex.
  - 56.5 percent agree that a healthy-looking person can have HIV.
  - 51.4 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites.
  - 42.6 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected.
  - 40.6 percent think that AIDS is curable.
- Only 13 in 100 youth have comprehensive and correct knowledge of HIV-AIDS, the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest in the country.
- 76.9 percent of the youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS.



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