

Education in the Philippines

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Honors Lit

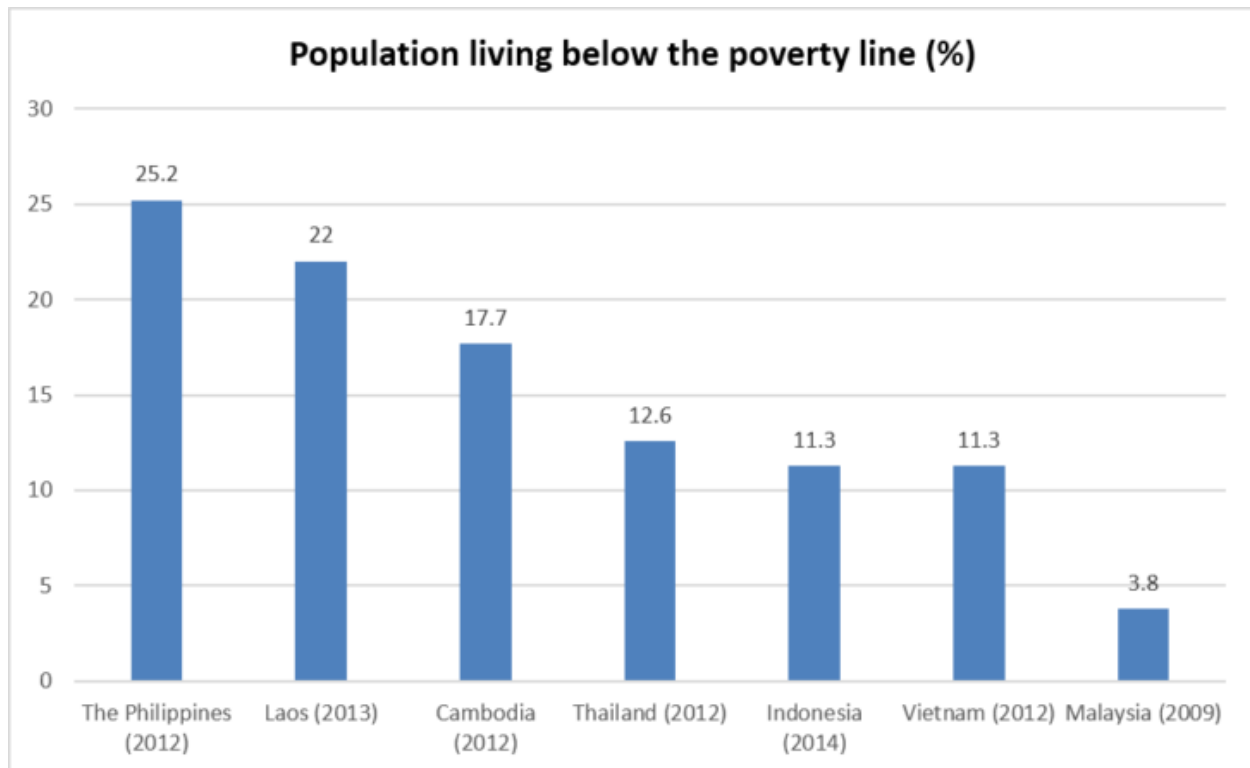
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## Education in the Philippines

It is unlikely that one could go through a day of American high school without hearing complaints about the heavy amount of homework or the test that someone is going to fail on Friday. While complaints such as these are not without cause, there are times when students in first-world countries forget how lucky they are to receive an education. The number of children not in school in the Republic of the Philippines continues to grow. By June 2017, nearly four million Filipino children were deprived of education (“3.8M out-of-school children”). The problems impacting education in the Philippines include poverty, child marriage, dense populations, a corrupt system, and outdated practices. The problem of education arises not just in the Philippines either – this problem impacts many third-world nations across the globe. The lack of students in school contributes to the lack of development in these countries – education helps to break the cycle of poverty. The Philippines sorely needs an action such as this right now as 25.2% of the population live below the poverty line, a number higher than most of Southeast Asia (see table 1). Ideas to eradicate the staggering amount of Filipino children attending school include the Philippine government implementing policies to help potential students be given more opportunities. Organizations like Childfund and Save the Children help solve some problems that lead to this lack of education firsthand.

Table 1

Population of southeast Asian countries living below the poverty line



Source: CIA World Factbook, *Population living below the poverty line (%)*, Central Intelligence Agency, 22 March 2017.

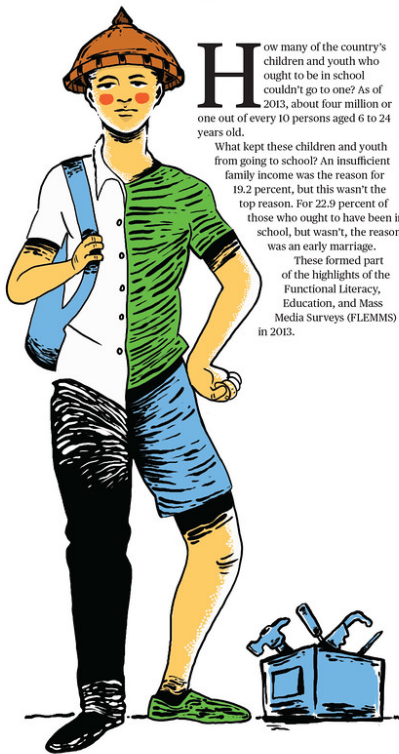
The number of students not receiving an education in the Philippines is classified as the number of children aged six to twenty-four not attending school. This situation affects each group of students differently, with variables including age and gender. Out-of-school children are more likely to be female. 17% of female children leave school due to lack of income and 10.3% leave due to a lack of interest (see table 2). One of the largest factors that hinder girls from receiving an education is, alarmingly, child marriage; 36.2% of girls leave school in order to get married. Education allows young women many opportunities and lowers the likelihood of getting

married before becoming an adult. Keeping young women in school also lowers the chance of them having children before the age of 18, as well as lowering the number of prenatal deaths (“Poverty and Education”). Meanwhile, some of the largest factors affecting the education of boys include a lack of interest, a lack of income, and an illness/disability. Lacking interest, which ranks the highest at 33.1%, is a vague answer as it could mean that boys are pressured not to stay in school or have a lack of parental support. Lacking income, an issue that greatly affects girls as well, ranks second at 22.7%. Illness or disability still affects young men, who might have to travel great distances to reach a school building, at 12.2% (see table 2). Overall, over one out of ten Filipino children aged five to 14 are engaged in child labor, greatly contributing to the number of children out of school. About ten percent are married or in a union keeping them from their education (“Helping children access education”). Another variable of the growing education problem is location. One of the biggest education gaps occurs in Calabarzon, where 505,273 children are out of school. This large amount may be due to the dense population or even the amount of indigenous tribes in the area. Other areas with large quantities of children out of school are Central Luzon, Western Visayas, Western Manila, and Central Visayas (see table 2). Location and other variables all prevent children from accessing the education that they are given.

Table 2

Variables of children out of school in the Philippines

### 3.8M Filipino children, youth don't go to school

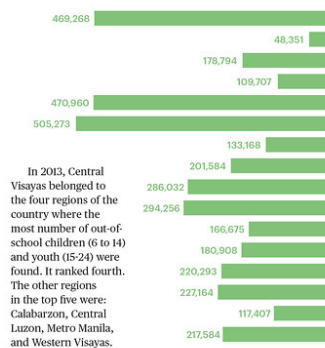


**H**ow many of the country's children and youth who ought to be in school couldn't go to one? As of 2013, about four million or one out of every 10 persons aged 6 to 24 years old.

What kept these children and youth from going to school? An insufficient family income was the reason for 19.2 percent, but this wasn't the top reason. For 22.9 percent of those who ought to have been in school, but wasn't, the reason was an early marriage.

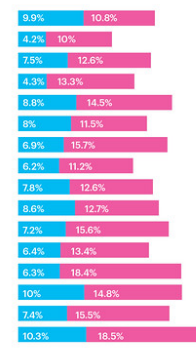
These formed part of the highlights of the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Surveys (FLEMMS) in 2013.

#### Where are the out-of-school children and youth?



In 2013, Central Visayas belonged to the four regions of the country where the most number of out-of-school children (6 to 14) and youth (15-24) were found. It ranked fourth. The other regions in the top five were: Calabarzon, Central Luzon, Metro Manila, and Western Visayas.

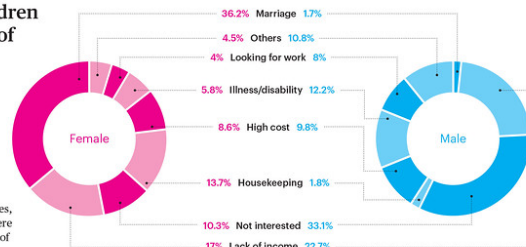
#### Boys and girls out of school



(The 2013 survey excluded Eastern Visayas.)

#### What kept children and youth out of school?

An early marriage was the reason more than one-third of the country's female out-of-school youth didn't stay in school. The second most common reason was that household chores kept them from going to school. Among males, however, the top reasons were lack of interest and the lack of family income.



SOURCE: PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY | GRAPHICS: RIGI, KENT R. NYOT | ILLUSTRATION: BERNARD FABRO

Source: SunStar Cebu, *3.8M Filipino children, youth don't go to school*, Philippine Statistics Authority, 14, June 2017.

Various factors affect a student's ability to access location and this lack of education is one that affects students profoundly. The cycle of poverty is continued when potential students lose the resources needed to escape it. Low educations and skill-sets hinder economic growth for the Philippines, as well as impacting children themselves. Leaving school in order to provide for their family leaves students lacking the literacy and numeracy skills they would need to later to

rise above their station. Though schools in the Philippines are technically free, the cost for uniforms, books, and transportation may hinder students in attending (“Poverty and Education”). Standards of life are directly connected to education. As General Jose Ramon Albert, Secretary of the National Statistical Coordination Board, says, “Education correlates with living standards: practically 19 out of 20 poor persons in 2009 belong to households where the heads have little to no schooling” (Pennington).

The relatively underdeveloped educational system is rooted in its history. Philippine schooling became formal due to the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines. The system initially developed to be religiously-oriented and available mainly for the purpose of the elites. Later on, laws were put into place that made it mandatory to have a co-ed primary school in each town. Even when a formal education system was put into place it was “inadequate, suppressed, and controlled” (“Historical Perspective....”). As Spanish control later gave way into American control, a free public school system was put into place that was later made to be highly centralized. Only recently were acts put into place that made the school system into the K-12 system that it is under today. The educational system is at a fault today due to various reasons. “The Kindergarten Act of 2012 and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 extended formal education from ten to 13 years” (Pennington). Although the government attempted to create a series of reforms in order to fight against increasing dropout rates, so far, they proved ineffective. The presence of unqualified teacher further disadvantages students. Other disadvantages include overcrowded classrooms, broken desks, and a lack of computers (“Poverty and Education”).

These problems in education, no matter the background, do not only affect the Philippines, but many other countries as well such as India, Guinea, and Kenya. Some of the

places where unschooled children live at great quantities include Sub-Saharan Africa, central and eastern Asia, and the Pacific. The continuous problems of these regions can be classified as “educational poverty” - when a child is in school for less than four years - or “extreme educational poverty” - when a child is in school for less than two years. In some of these countries, extreme educational poverty affects more than half of the child population (“Right to Education”). This extreme lack of education not only deters the development of the child but the development of the country’s society and economy.

The lack of education affecting many countries such as India and the Philippines can be stopped if attention is paid. Dropout rates could decrease through the use of maximized meal programs and a better school climate (Slade). It is suggested that students should be given support between certain grades when they are most likely to drop out. These dropout points exist between grades one and two and between primary and secondary school (Palanca). Some of the greatest effects could be seen by giving students the resources they need, such as books and other resources. Furthermore, great strides in the development of a better school system include taking children out of situations that keep them from pursuing an education, such child labor or child marriage (“Education and Poverty”). It is a combination of actions taken by the government and the people that can give children the opportunities that they deserve.

Students such as Julaina, a teenage girl from Mindanao, Philippines, walk for two hours to get to school. Along the way, she deals with wide rivers that she must cross, caring for her six siblings, and going without rice to eat. Through special programs, however, she is given basic education and healthcare that she can later use to bring herself into a better situation (“Helping children access education”). Children such as Julaina remind us about how lucky we must be to

be given an education without any obstacles. The number of children not receiving an education in the Philippines continues to grow, due to poverty, child marriage, dense populations, a corrupt system, and outdated practices. Education is something that all children should be given a right to, regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, race, etc. We can help give them the education that they deserve through helping others become more aware of educational situations, raising money to give them more opportunities, and volunteering through charities such as ChildFund and Save the Children. Education affects children and their surrounding communities in various ways. It allows students to become more aware of the rights that they have as children. It helps improve food security and reduce malnutrition by teaching about agricultural techniques and proper nutrition for healthy development. It can help reduce the spread of communicative diseases by teaching others about public health and other vital information. It can improve gender equality by teaching young women about the reproductive and marriage rights available to them and it can help improve health standards by teaching about subjects such as prenatal care, sanitation, and clean water ("Poverty and Education"). Those who are poor are more than likely to stay poor - and education can help end this cycle (Slade). By breaking the cycle of poverty, children are given more opportunities to not only improve their state of living, but the state of their countries and, in turn, the world.



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