

Spotlight: Philippines

Context

The Philippines is an archipelagic nation in Southeast Asia that consists of over 7,000 islands. The Philippines became a Pathfinding Country in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children in 2016 and recently launched an INSPIRE-aligned National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children.

Violence against children is widespread in the Philippines, exacerbated in conflict-affected areas. In 2016, the government released the results of the National Baseline Study on Violence against Children (NBS-VAC): the first of its kind in the region. The results of the study showed a high prevalence of violence against children. 2 in 3 children experience physical violence, of which more than half happens at home. The most common cases of violence are corporal punishment committed by parents and siblings. 3 in 5 children have experienced psychological violence, while 1 in 5 children have experienced sexual violence.¹

“In the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), we call on our units to take a more proactive role when it comes to reporting cases of child abuse and sexual exploitation. More importantly, we want to promote a mindset among Filipinos that child abuse and sexual exploitation of children is wrong and should not be allowed in a society that claims to have respect for children’s rights.”

DSWD Sec. Judy M. Taguiwalo, March 2017²

AT A GLANCE³

Population: **103.3** million
 Girls (0-19): **21** million
 Boys (0-19): **22.2** million

GDP per capita: US **\$2,951.1**

Prevalence rates of violence against children⁴

Physical violence: **66.3%**
 Emotional violence: **59.2%**
 Sexual violence: **17.1%**

Selected Policy and Legal Framework

National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (2018)

Philippines National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children 2000-2025 (Child 21)

Second National Plan of Action for Children 2011-2016⁵

National Strategic Framework for Action to End Violence Against Children 2008

Revised Policy on the Establishment of Women and their Children Protection Units in all Government Hospitals 2013⁶

Revised Policy on Violence and Injury Prevention 2014⁷

Information and Guidelines for the Management of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) in Children 2005⁸

Child and Youth Welfare Code 1974⁹

Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act 1992¹⁰

Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act 2006¹¹

Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act 2004¹²

Alignment with the WHO’s Global Plan of Action

Pillar	Selected actions taken
Pillar I Strengthen health system leadership and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the multisectoral and INSPIRE-aligned National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (2018) • Comprehensive development of policies on Women and Child Protection Units and on Violence and Injury Prevention (2013 and 2014) • Becoming a Pathfinding Country within the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (2016)
Pillar II Strengthen health service delivery and health workers/providers' capacity to respond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Network and Women and Child Protection Unit implementation and scale-up (since 1997)
Pillar III Strengthen programming to prevent interpersonal violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information through the Women and Child Protection Units (since 1997)
Pillar IV Improve information and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the National Baseline Survey – Violence Against Children (2016) • Inclusion of a module on domestic violence in the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey

Policy and Legal Framework for Ending Violence Against Children

The Philippines has a robust legal and policy framework to end violence against children, grounded in a Constitutional mandate to defend the right of children “to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development.”¹³ The government recently launched a National Plan of Action to End Violence against Children, predicated on 6 preconditions for success, including widespread positive parenting and discipline training, personal skill development in children, appropriate and accessible services, multi-stakeholder child protection systems at all levels of administration, and a well-developed and effectively managed monitoring and evaluation system.¹⁴ The National Plan of Action aims to implement five of the strategies from the WHO’s *INSPIRE Framework*, including norms and values and response and support services.¹⁵ National policies already in place on Women and Child



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Protection Units and Violence and Injury Prevention demonstrate a long-standing commitment to strengthen the health system’s efforts to combat violence against children.

Child Protection Network

The Child Protection Network was established in 2002, introducing six child protection units that ensured abused children could access services with the highest standard of care. The network aims to bring together medical professionals, social workers, police, and lawyers in the units in each of the country's 81 provinces.¹⁶ Evidence is positive for the performance of the network, although access remains problematic for those not living in city centres.¹⁷ By 2016, the network had been scaled up to include 78 Women and Child Protection Units in 43 provinces.¹⁸ The units are equipped with staff trained in recognition, reporting, recording, and referral of cases of violence against women and children. The units are equipped to provide interviews and crisis counselling, medical examinations, and culture- and gender-sensitive

information materials on violence against women and children. Under the national Department of Health, this programme aims to achieve the following:

- 1 Establish at least one unit in every province
- 2 Ensure that all health facilities have competent and trained gender-response professionals
- 3 Standardise and maintain quality of healthcare services within the unit
- 4 Ensure the sustainability of the programme through appropriate organisational and budgetary support
- 5 Create and maintain a centralised and harmonised database for reports submitted by units



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Data and Evidence Collection

The Philippines has conducted ground breaking data and evidence collection. Following a two-day research forum in 2016, partners pledged to fully implement the first ever National Baseline Survey on Violence Against Children (NBS-VAC) in October 2016. 3,866 children and youth responded, aged 13 to 24. The data is a powerful advocacy tool as well as a firm foundation upon which to build the Plan of Action.



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ENDNOTES

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