The Impact of COVID-19 on Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth in the Philippines

An Opportunity 2.0 Research Report

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EDC Education Development Center

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Foreword

The Philippines is a dynamic country with a vibrant economy and a demographic dividend. To fully maximize these potentials, the next generation of Filipinos—especially those at the margins such as out-of-school youth—must be given alternative pathways so they can be connected to opportunities and benefit from economic growth. This requires research, investment in education, adaptive services for young people, and innovative approaches to harnessing the energy of Filipino youth.

Through the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) "Opportunity 2.0: Second Chance Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth" program, we collaborate with national and local government agencies, the private sector, higher education institutions, and the youth themselves for a holistic approach that will:

- Improve second-chance education programs for out-of-school youth;
- Strengthen workforce readiness and technical vocational training; and
- Enhance the enabling environment for positive youth development at both national and local levels.

USAID's collaboration with our key partners through Opportunity 2.0 will reach 180,000 youth, support more than 2,000 teachers and trainers, and engage over 2,200 private sector employers in at least 12 cities.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many as three million youth ages 16- to 24-years-old were not in education, employed, or in training activities. This number is anticipated to grow, and appropriate systems and processes are needed to mitigate the effects of the current economic downturn so they can bounce back.

As this timely and insightful report highlights, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on youth employment and livelihood opportunities in the Philippines, but it also opens the door to new pathways for youth to excel. This labor market research used cutting-edge approaches to understand the rapidly changing environment and identify the emerging economic and educational opportunities for the near- and long-term, including growth in the digital, green, and blue economies. Re-skilling and re-deployment have the potential to safeguard jobs for out-of-school youth and reduce protracted unemployment when COVID-19 abates.

The restrictions put in place to safeguard the health of the community against COVID-19 have challenged us to think differently, to adjust our strategies and to pivot our activities so we can continue to effectively support the Philippines in delivering quality education at all levels. USAID is working with our partners to deploy hybrid approaches to learning, share knowledge, and innovate for greater equity and inclusion. We have used this opportunity to learn and create a new vision together while also advancing the vital knowledge and local resources that will lead to prosperity for individuals, families, and communities in the Philippines.

As we navigate the evolving "new normal" created by the pandemic, access to second chance and alternative learning coupled with community-based and home-based employment opportunities will enable improved access to labor markets, work readiness, and participation by those historically left behind: women, indigenous and minority populations, and youth living with disabilities.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of USAID in the Philippines, the U.S. government remains committed to investing in evidence-based programs that will enable Filipino youth to access work-based learning and entrepreneurship opportunities relevant to the demands of local labor markets. As we prepare for a post-COVID-19 world, we know there will continue to be shocks and stressors. But to build back better, we must build back together.

Sean Callahan
Acting Mission Director, USAID/Philippines, Mongolia and the Pacific Islands

Executive Summary

In the Philippines, the COVID-19 crisis has adversely and disproportionately impacted education, employment and livelihood opportunities for youth. The percentage of out-of-school youth (OSY) increased significantly during the pandemic, from 16.9% in January 2020 to 25.2% just three months later, in April 2020. The gap between the gainfully employed and the out-of-work or those experiencing in-work poverty has also been exacerbated across a wide range of economic sectors and industries. Offering youth opportunities to gain skills and knowledge that help ensure safe, sustainable employment has never been more important.

As many as three million Filipinos ages 16-24 are not in school, not gainfully employed and have not finished college or post-secondary education. Females are disproportionately impacted, comprising 63% of this figure. The trend toward OSY correlates with poverty; more than half of the three million OSY belong to the bottom 30% economically, based on per capita income. So, not only is the lack of opportunity for OSY a problem that impacts the entire Filipino population, it worsens the challenges faced by two already disadvantaged groups: women and those living at or below poverty level.

Without intervention, we anticipate the adverse effects of a lack of employability generally bestows upon any geographic region—rising crime rates, increasing healthcare costs and rising costs for other basic necessities for the population as a whole. At a macro level, the trend toward more OSY can lead to a lack of innovation and growth in gross domestic product (GDP). We must raise the earning capacity of households, bringing people out of poverty and in-work poverty, by providing OSY with employability in the form of skills, education and training for sustainable jobs.

This research (for full research methodology, see Appendix) utilized innovative social listening capabilities to perform automated web content analysis on thousands of social media posts and Philippine news sites to provide insight on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic opportunities for OSY. This digital analysis was combined with desk research and interviews of companies as well as Philippine agencies supporting employment. In brief, our recommendations center on:

- Focusing on the fastest growing economic and employment sectors for near- and medium-term job opportunities
- Utilizing upskilling and skilling, or adjacencies with an emphasis on digital savvy, green and blue economy job opportunities and technical trades, promoting certifications to ensure competency
- Ensuring young women are not left behind and have equity in terms of employment and livelihood opportunities

Based upon our research, it's more than possible to flip this situation for the good of the youth and their families, as well as the good of the Philippine economy. It will require deliberate, concerted effort on the part of government, non-government organizations (NGOs), business and academia. Better education correlates directly with higher incomes, but we must think beyond the traditional routes for education because of the speed and scale necessary to be successful sooner rather than later.

Building on the investments made in programs like those provided by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), we can drive equity and inclusion, strengthen and develop capacity within local institutions, provide youth with a solid foundation for longer-term sustainable employment, and improve the general welfare of communities throughout the Philippines by providing families with sufficient household incomes—pulling them out of poverty.

This report provides insights and practical suggestions to those working toward development of OSY skills and employment opportunities. It aims to place OSY on a path to recovery by identifying in-demand opportunities in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. This human capital, in turn, can be leveraged by cities to regain the momentum in their economic growth. Solving the challenge of OSY can help create an economically thriving, self-reliant Philippines.

COVID-19 Context

We conducted two analyses of online media sources—one for October 2019 to mid-March 2020 and another from mid-March 2020 to July 2020—to assess the potential differences in the OSY employment topic during COVID-19. The analyses showed most pre-COVID-19 news and media posts were related to employment opportunities, government programs and skills training for OSY. During COVID-19, however, news posts were about how digital learning needs to play an important role in skilling OSY, alternative job options for OSY, possible unemployment and job losses (Figure 1).

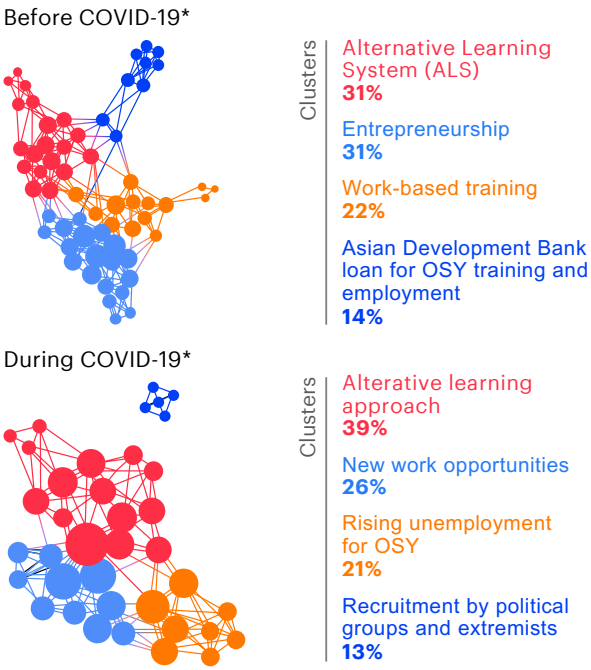
Positive sentiment from online OSY-related news stories fell from 90% to 68% during the given period (Figure 2). The high positive sentiments in the pre-COVID-19 period can be largely attributed to programs funded by the government and multilateral organizations toward skilling and empowering OSY. The reduction in positive sentiments during COVID-19 is because of rising uncertainties from the pandemic, fear of unemployment and the threat of youth recruitment by extremist groups. Interviews with government agencies revealed that education has been significantly affected by the pandemic, with a 48% drop in enrollment from 2019.

We also collected social media listening data from Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and more to conduct a comparative analysis between pre-COVID-19 (October 2019 to mid-March 2020) and COVID-19 (mid-March 2020 to July 2020). Most pre-COVID-19 social media posts were related to employment opportunities and partnerships, as well as vocational training for OSY. Social media posts during COVID-19 were about skill training, flexible training to foster work for the unemployed, or OSY and fear of a rise in school dropouts.

The sentiment analysis from social media also indicated a significant drop in positive sentiments after COVID-19 struck, dropping from 63% to a mere 11% (Figure 3). Positive sentiment during pre-COVID-19 is largely attributed to programs funded by the government and multilateral organizations toward job opportunities and training for OSY. Negative sentiment during COVID-19 is due to the increase in youth unemployment, higher risk of school dropouts, child labor and sexual exploitation, as well as a key youth employability program being put on hold.

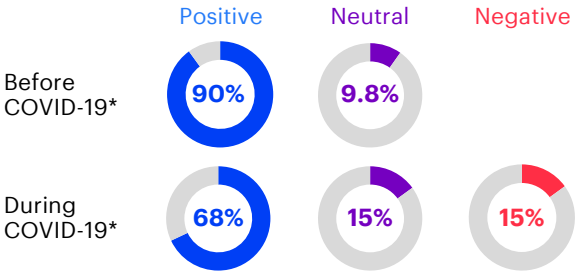
Official government data indicates that youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) as a percentage of the youth population peaked at 25.2% in April 2020 and is in a current state of fragile recovery (Figure 4).[1] It validates that COVID-19 has had a detrimental impact on youth employment and livelihood opportunities.

Figure 1: Clusters of topics from Quid analysis of news articles



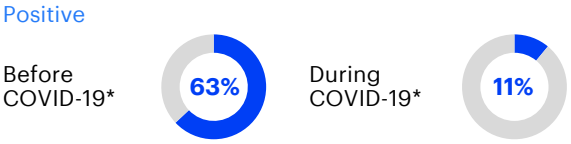
* Before and during COVID-19 are defined as October 1, 2019 to March 15, 2020, and March 16, 2020 to July 15, 2020, respectively

Figure 2: Sentiments from the news



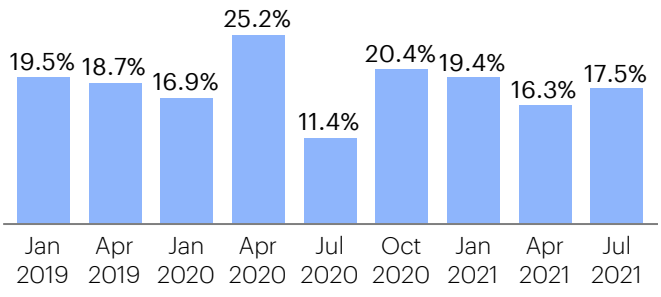
* Before and during COVID-19 are defined as October 1, 2019 to March 15, 2020, and March 16, 2020 to July 15, 2020, respectively

Figure 3: Sentiments from socia media listening



* Before and during COVID-19 are defined as October 1, 2019 to March 15, 2020, and March 16, 2020 to July 28, 2020, respectively

Figure 4: Youth NEET as % of youth population[2]



Key Insights from the Research

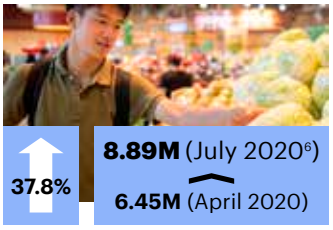
Clearly COVID-19 has disrupted the labor markets. Based on our research, here are the key recommendations to increase opportunities for OSY in the Philippines and to place them on a path of long-term recovery. These recommendations are divided into three broad areas with corresponding detailed recommendations.

1. Target in-demand jobs

1.1 Near- and medium-term: Focus on in-demand jobs

We identified near- and medium-term in-demand jobs in key growth sectors, based on interviews, desk research and advertisements on social media platforms. During the COVID-19 crisis, we saw an increase in opportunities for construction laborer/mason, salespersons, cashier, contact tracers, and disinfection and sanitation. OSY could speed their path to these jobs by earning the relevant National Certifications (NCs) for each.

A recent TESDA report identified construction, wholesale/retail trade, and health as sectors that registered the highest job growth during the COVID-19 crisis. Between April to July 2020, the construction sector recorded 45.1% growth in jobs - the highest among all sectors. Construction laborer has been the most in-demand job in this sector when compared to the pre-COVID-19 scenario and is expected to remain so in the near term. Social media listening revealed electrician, production worker, welder and plumber to be the most common jobs for OSY pre-pandemic, with electrician still in demand during COVID-19.

Near-term jobs (1-2 years)		In-demand jobs	Relevant certifications
Construction: Between April to July 2020, the sector recorded 45.1% growth in jobs[3], the highest among all sectors. Construction laborer has been the most in-demand job in this sector when compared to the pre-COVID-19 scenario and is expected to remain so in the near term. Social media listening revealed electrician, production worker, welder and plumber to be the most common jobs for OSY pre-pandemic, with electrician still in demand during COVID-19.		• Construction Laborer/Mason • Electrician • Welder • Plumber • Carpenter	• Masonry NC I, II and III • Tile Setting NC II • Electrical Installation and Maintenance NC II, III and IV • Shielded Metal Arc Welding NC I, II, III and IV • Plumbing NC I, II and III • Carpentry NC I, II and III
Wholesale and Retail: The sector has also shown remarkable growth during the crisis, with a 37.8% growth in jobs from April to July 2020.[5] Social media listening revealed salesperson and cashier to be the most common jobs for OSY before and during COVID-19. Three supply-side interviewees identified sales jobs as the most in-demand during COVID-19. Nearly 500 active the job posts were identified on the LinkedIn platform for the position of salesperson in February 2021 alone.		• Salesperson • Cashier • Grocery Store Attendant • Bagger • Temperature Taker	• Customer Services NC II • Warehousing Services NC II • Bookkeeping NC II
Health: The sector emerged as the third fastest growing sector during COVID-19 in terms of number of jobs, with 18.5% growth between April and July 2020.[7] Social media listening revealed disinfection and sanitation to be the most common jobs for OSY during COVID-19. In fact, TESDA has developed competency standards on Contact Tracing Level II in partnership with the Department of Health and has been offering it as a free training program through the TESDA Technology Institutions (TTIs).[8]		• Contact Tracer • Disinfection and Sanitation • Swabber • Nursing & Administrative Support • Ambulance Driver	• Caregiving NC II • Pharmacy Services NC III • Barangay Health Services NC II • Health Care Services NC II • Driving NC II
E-commerce: The sector emerged as another frontrunner. Eight out of 17 demand-side interviewees cited the sector's jobs among in-demand opportunities. Similarly, in interviews with youth, it emerged as one of the leading sectors in terms of employment growth during the pandemic. Three demand- and four supply-side interviewees identified online selling as the most in-demand among immediate jobs, and eight demand-side interviewees identified food deliveries as in-demand immediate jobs. There were 412 active job posts on LinkedIn for the job of drivers in February 2021.	 * Based on LinkedIn analysis	• Online Seller (clothes, food) • Food Delivery/ Driver • Online Trainer (low-level technical skills) • Vlogger	• Driving NC II
Food Services: The sector showed a decent growth of 4.7% in jobs between April and June 2020.[11] Five demand-side interviewees identified Food Services as in-demand among immediate jobs. Social media listening revealed waitress and cook to be the most common jobs for OSY pre-COVID-19, and baker and merchandiser during COVID-19.		• Baker • Merchandiser/ Butcher • Cook • Waiter/Waitress	• Food and Beverage Services NC II • Slaughtering Operations Large Animals/Swine NC II • Bread and Pastry Production NC II • Commercial Cooking NC III and IV • Barista NC II • Bartending NC II

Legend: Jobs in purple are those which increased during COVID-19 based on digital content analysis and interviews

Medium-term jobs (3-5 years)

Our research also included analysis of medium-term job demand, which is characterized as demand for jobs in the next three to five years. Government studies indicate that manufacturing and construction, wholesale and retail trade, and information technology are among the sectors projected to record the highest employment growth over the medium term—despite some immediate impacts by the pandemic on a few of these sectors.

		In-demand jobs	Relevant certifications
Manufacturing and Construction: The sector is expected to have the highest number of in-demand jobs in the medium-term, with an expected employment creation of 3.22 million jobs by 2022.[13] Four demand-side interviewees identified construction laborer as most in-demand during COVID-19. Social media listening showed production worker, welder and plumber to be in demand for OSY pre-COVID-19, and electrician before and during COVID-19.	 **0.4%** change[14] **3.22M** jobs are expected to be created by 2022[15]	• Production Worker • Construction Laborer/Mason • Electrician • Welder • Plumber • Carpenter	• Masonry NC I, II and III • Tile Setting NC II • Electrical Installation and Maintenance NC II, III and IV • Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NC I, II, III and IV • Plumbing NC I, II and III • Carpentry NC I, II and III
Wholesale Trade and Retail: The sectors are expected to create 866,000 jobs by 2022.[16] Social media listening revealed salesperson and cashier to be the most common jobs for OSY before and during COVID-19. Three supply-side interviewees identified sales jobs as most in-demand during COVID-19.	 **4.1%** change[17] **866k** jobs are expected to be created by 2022[18]	• Salesperson • Cashier • Grocery Store Attendant • Bagger • Temperature Taker	• Customer Services NC II • Warehousing Services NC II • Bookkeeping NC II
Information Technology: It's the third highest relevant sector for the medium-term with an expected employment creation of 756,000 jobs by 2022.[19] Social media listening revealed closed-circuit television (CCTV) technician to be a very common job for OSY pre-COVID-19 and customer service representative as common during COVID-19. Twelve demand-side and three supply-side interviewees identified IT jobs as most in-demand during COVID-19.	 **28.8%** change[20] **756k** jobs are expected to be created by 2022[21]	• Customer Service Representative • CCTV Technician • Encoder Clerk	• Computer System Servicing NC II • Customer Services NC II • Cable Television Installation NC II • Broadband Installation NC II • Telecom Outside Plant (OSP) Installation NC II
Transport and Logistics: The sector is expected to create 413,000 jobs by 2022.[22] Social media listening showed packer and transport driver to be among the most common jobs for OSY during COVID-19.	 **10.2%** change[23] **413k** jobs are expected to be created by 2022[24]	• Packer • Vehicle Driver • Mechanic • Automotive Painter • Travel Clerk	• Automotive Servicing NC III and IV • Auto Body Painting Finishing NC III • Driving NC II
Hospitality and Tourism: The sector was expected to create 1.62 million jobs by 2022 before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.[25] Due to COVID-19, jobs decreased by 35.9% in the sector from July 2019 to July 2020.[26] Prior to COVID-19, jobs such as waiter, housekeeper and janitor were common. They hold more potential for growth in the medium-term than the near-term.	 **35.9%** change[27] **1.62M** jobs are expected to be created by 2022[28]	• Waiter • Housekeeper • Janitor • Massage Therapist	• Travel Services NC II • Front Office Services NC II • Tourism Promotion Services NC II
Agribusiness: The sector is another fast-growing sector, projected to create 1.855 million jobs from 2018 to 2022, with a 3% growth rate for crops and 2.2% growth for fishing.[29]	 **3%** change[30] **2.2%** fishing[30] **1.86M** jobs to be created from 2018 to 2022[31]	• Hand Tractor and Plant Operator • Heavy Equipment Mechanic • Fish Canning and Processing • Horticultural Worker	• Horticulture NC II • Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Mechanic NC II • Seaweed Production NC II • Agricultural Crops Production NC I and II
Creative Industry: Lastly, the sector is emerging as an important sector especially for OSY, with three demand-side and two supply-side interviewees identifying computer graphics designing and animation as most in-demand both pre- and during COVID-19.	 Animation **~4,395** (2022[32]) **1,700** (2016)	• Animation • Graphic Design • Vlogging • Video Making and Editing	• Animation NC III • Illustration NC II • Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAD/CAM) Operator NC II

Legend: Jobs in purple are those which increased during COVID-19 based on digital content analysis and interviews

In the near term, highest growth has been observed in the Manufacturing and Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Health and E-commerce sectors. In the medium-term, the maximum job opportunities span across Manufacturing and Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Information Technology, Transport and Logistics, Hospitality and Tourism and Agribusiness sectors.

During the crisis, a directional increase in opportunities has been estimated for certain jobs such as construction laborers, salespersons, cashiers, contact tracers, and disinfection and sanitation workers, as compared to the pre-COVID-19 period. Relevant NCs have been identified that can be obtained by OSY to upskill for these in-demand jobs, such as Caregiving NC II and Health Care Services NC II for the health sector.

1.2 Skill adjacencies improve employment opportunities for OSY

Reskilling and redeployment is one possibility to safeguard jobs and ensure minimal unemployment in the post-COVID-19 era. Identifying jobs that require adjacent skillsets and redeploying OSY to these jobs can improve employment prospects in the near- and medium-term. Employers also indicate that it is easier to train people with adjacent skills than to train fresh recruits.[33]

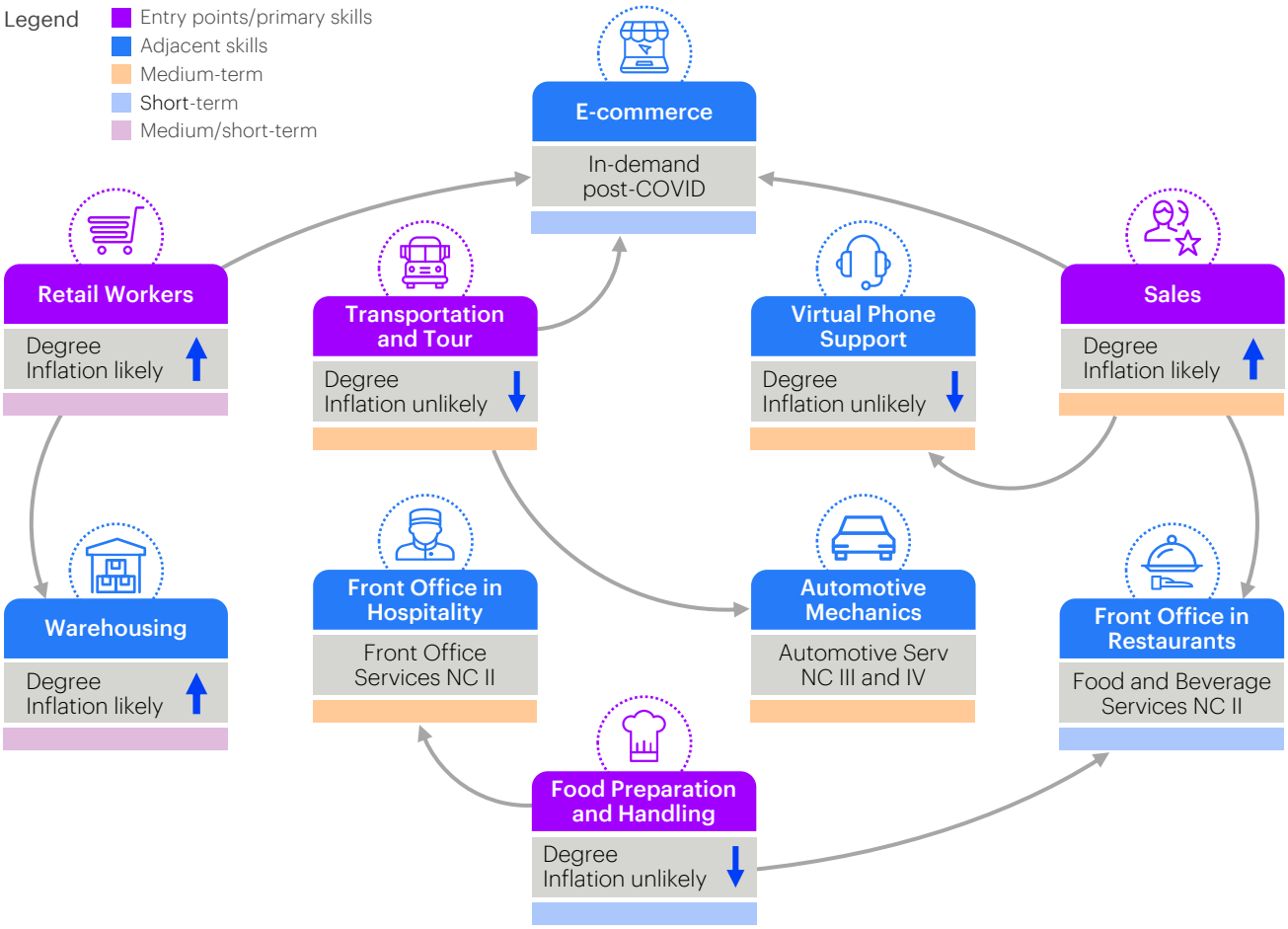
We integrated findings on near- and medium-term jobs from desk research, interviews with employers and social media analytics with skill adjacencies and degree inflation to lay out some skill adjacency pathways (Figure 5). "Degree inflation" occurs when employers seek college degrees for jobs that do not require college-level skills. Jobs with degree inflation tend toward increased competition. Tying certifications to in-demand jobs is crucial; offering NCs is a way to expand employment opportunities for OSY, especially for jobs with high degree inflation.

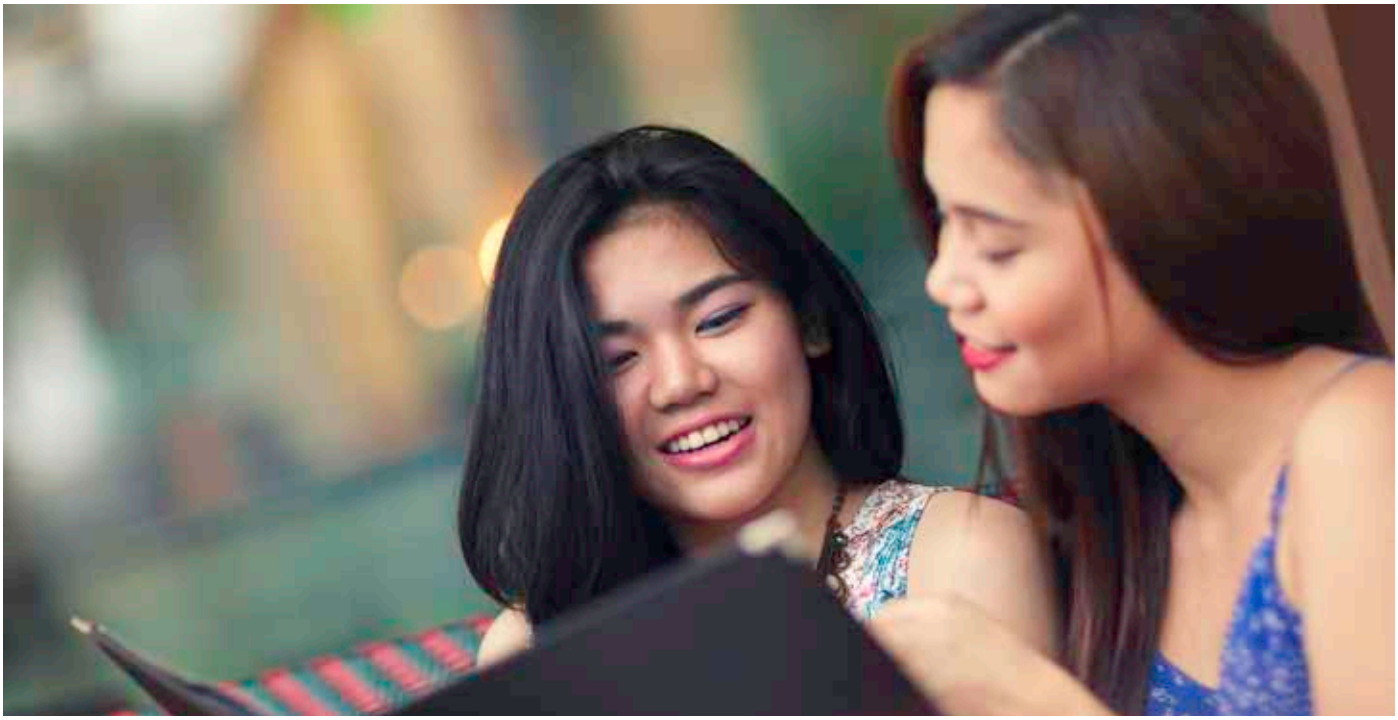
For example, while Retail is an entry point for OSY, they face competition for jobs in this sector from college graduates. But OSY who have trained for, or are working in Sales or Transportation, can widen job opportunities available to them by moving to a different sector with similar skills requirements—like E-commerce.

An entry point where OSY will face less competition for jobs is food preparation and handling, a near-term in-demand opportunity with a low risk of degree inflation. By obtaining a Front Office Services NC II, OSY can also shift to a medium-term, in-demand opportunity in hospitality front-office roles where skills requirements are adjacent to food preparation and handling. Certifications can help to expand opportunities for OSY not just in the near-term but also in the medium-term.

To improve employment prospects for OSY in the near- and medium-term, focusing on in-demand jobs that overlap with skills adjacencies can be effective. To broaden employment opportunities, OSY can target jobs within sectors with less likelihood of degree inflation and with possibilities to upskill with relevant certifications.

Figure 5: Examples of skills adjacencies





1.3 Ensuring young women are not left behind

Launch targeted campaigns to correct gender stereotypes

It is essential that the Philippines include gender-responsive measures for inclusion in its plan to address OSY—even more so now because the pandemic has profoundly impacted girls' and young women's education, health and well-being globally.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that almost 510 million, or 40% of all employed women, work in sectors severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis.[34] In the Philippines, the pandemic has exacerbated challenges like lack of economic opportunities or less inclusive labor practices, placing women and girls at heightened vulnerability.[35]

Some 4.1 million women could face job disruption due to COVID-19.[36] In addition, the number of hours that girls and young women devote to learning has been significantly reduced due to the crisis.[37] Their capabilities are undervalued, and they are limited to carrying out unpaid household and care work despite their continuing interest to learn and be productive.[38]

Gender stereotypes are a major contributor toward imbalance in labor force participation across genders. Out of the 3.6 million out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) in 2017—which is estimated to increase to four million in 2021 as a result of the pandemic[39]—63.3% are female.[40] A good percentage of women cannot study or work as they want to because they are given more responsibilities around the house than the male members of their families. Women are culturally perceived as homemakers whereas males are expected to contribute in the workplace.[41] 84% of total household time allocated to childcare is provided by women.[42] With a limited amount of time and energy, unless a cultural shift happens at home, it will be difficult to create one at work.

Likewise, there are gender stereotypes concerning the types of jobs for which women are considered a good fit. The infrastructure sector is perceived to be fit for male OSY due to the physical demands of the work.[43] In the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, fewer females get assessed and certified despite having higher rates of enrollment and graduation from training courses. For instance, in 2019, 39,000+ females graduated versus 31,000+ males. Yet, fewer women—only 6,858—earned certification, versus 8,625 males.[44] The gap is even more pronounced when analyzing data from LinkedIn, which indicates that in information technology and related occupations, only 24% of women are employed, compared to 76% of men.[45]

Launching targeted campaigns can help correct the gender stereotypes. Measures promoting gender-neutral parental leave and childcare services provision would help address norms, attitudes and behaviors around household and care work.[46]

Some interventions are already underway. DOLE is working at ground level to convince young women who show interest to take an ALS course or study further.[45] TESDA is also working with employers to help correct gender stereotypes. For example, employers in Cebu have programs to attract women into the building and infrastructure sector, particularly in welding where women are observed to be as equally good as men, if not better. Innovations in the infrastructure sector (e.g., pre-cast construction) can make it more accessible to female OSY as well.[47]

The ICT industry is another example. According to an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, women display a relative advantage in ICT task-based skills. Considering the relatively lower employment of women in information technology[49], the sector presents a huge opportunity for women which can garner relatively higher rewards in labor markets and reduce the gender wage gap.[50]

TESDA cites women being employed as computer numerical control (CNC) machinists in Baguio as a best practice that can be emulated. This is a skill in high demand in the aerospace parts and products manufacturing industry.[51]

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted the education and employment opportunities for young women and exacerbated the existing gender stereotypes. For example, the gender perceptions result in skewed gender ratio in infrastructure and ICT sectors. Initiatives undertaken by employers in Cebu to attract women to welding jobs in the infrastructure sector are examples of targeted campaigns that can help correct these stereotypes.

Encourage home- and community-based work

Alternative livelihood assistance in the form of home- and community-based work can help young women who are currently rearing young children to obtain paid work without having to leave their localities. Digital technology enables women to work in family situations that previously would have precluded them from doing so.

In our discussions with youth interviewees, a majority concurred that home-based work increases the labor force participation of women OSY. Likewise, when asked whether community-based work increases the labor force participation of women OSY, the response of most youth interviewees was a strong affirmative. Among the female interviewees, all unanimously agreed that home- and community-based work increases the labor force participation of women OSY.

Home-based work can take many forms, but among the most common are online sales and Ecommerce jobs, virtual assistants, bakers, vertical gardeners, graphic designers, customer service representatives and bookkeepers (Figure 6). Some of these jobs, such as online sales, baking and vertical gardening, are also among the near- and medium-term in-demand jobs.

These jobs could increase women's participation in the labor force while increasing women's earning potential significantly. DOLE and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have launched an e-commerce roadmap to support women working in the sector.[52] TESDA Online Program (TOP) also provides easy access to technical education, especially for women based at home, to increase their employment and income-earning opportunities.[53]

Similarly, examples of community-based work include horticulture, baking, grocery store attendant, food delivery, value-creation-based agribusiness (packaging dried fruits, coconut water, organic rice, etc.), and professional services like sewing, beauty or hairdressing (Figure 6). Like home-based jobs, many community-based opportunities also have a strong overlap with near- and medium-term in-demand jobs, such as horticulture, food delivery and grocery store attendants, which can increase women's incomes. Based on the yearly result of TESDA's Study on the Employment of Technical and Vocational. Education and Training (TVET) Graduates (SETG), most of the participants and graduates of community-based programs are women.[54]

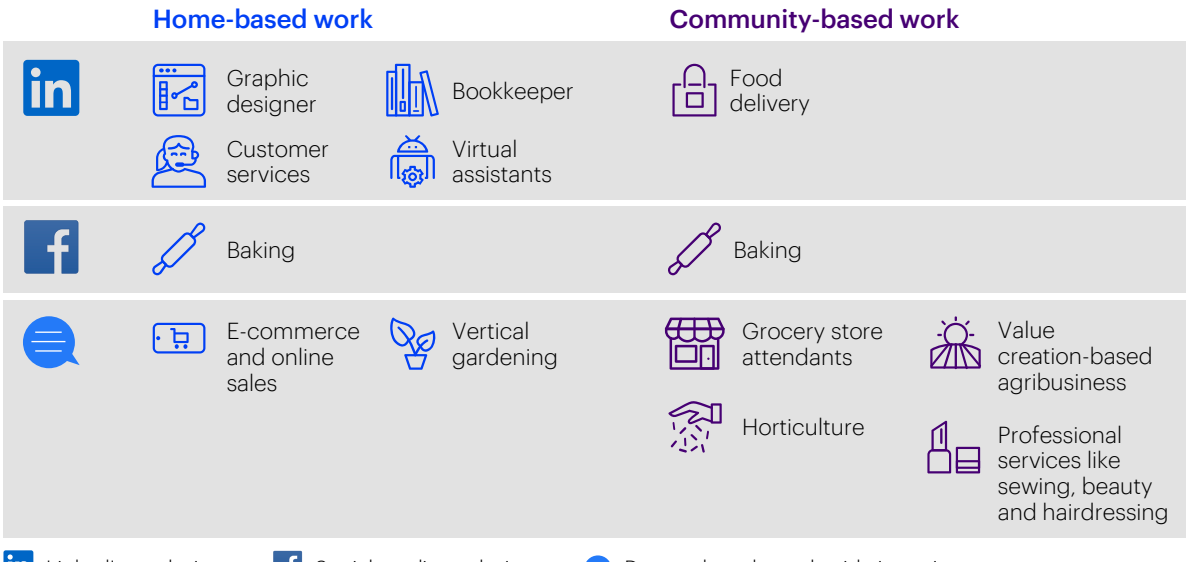
Alternative livelihood assistance in the form of home- and community-based work, which often coincides with near- and medium-term in-demand jobs, can help increase not only women's labor force participation but also their earning potential. Empowering women to use ICT can go a long way, as having social media and online skills can help women engage in remote home-based work.

2. Nurture holistic skills for the future

2.1 Embed work readiness skills in TVET to complement technical, and green and blue skills

The demand for green and blue skills is growing at a fast pace and is poised to increase in the future. COVID-19 has exposed the consequences of prioritizing unchecked growth without adhering to environmental protection.

Figure 6: Examples of home- and community-based work for women OSY



At the forefront is the need to not only build back better but also build back greener. Thus, green and blue (seaweed farming and responsible fishing) skills are a key opportunity area for OSY. There is a gradual shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy efficiency, automobiles to mass transit and micromobility (e.g., bicycles, e-bikes and electric scooters), waste disposal to recycling, and primary metals production to secondary production. For instance, there has been an increasing adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the Philippines. Technicians and mechanics will be needed for the repair and maintenance of these types of vehicles.

The key sectors likely to have more demand for green and blue skills are infrastructure, transport, services, agriculture, waste management and aquaculture. As per a TESDA report, the number of graduates and certified individuals is still quite low relative to the estimated employment demand in green and blue jobs across these sectors.[55]

Infrastructure and power
- Photovoltaic technician
- Solar designer
- Electronics for green technologies
- Climate change-resilient development

Transport
- Carbon emissions technician
- Conversion of vehicles for clean fuel
- Electric vehicle driver and mechanic

Agriculture and aquaculture
- Hydroponics
- Vertical gardening
- Organic farming
- Seaweed farming

> *"There is good demand for these [green skills] as people are going back to their provinces, e.g., organic farming, hydroponics – we are running out of farmers, [there is also] opportunity for OSY to install solar panels."*
>
> Cottage industry owner interviewee, Quezon City

Some examples of in-demand green and blue skills across different locations as mentioned by the interviewees include:

- **Davao**: coconut farming, organic farming, fruit picking and bagsuk (bagging suksuk)
- **Quezon City**: organic farming, hydroponics and solar panel installation
- **Cebu**: recycling and waste management, organic farming and solar technician

TESDA has established a Green Technology Center (GTC) that offers various green- and blue-skills training courses as a response to emerging needs. GTC is involved with the greening of Training Regulations (TRs), assessments, certifications and train-the-trainer courses on green technologies such as renewable energy, efficient energy use and management, water and wastewater treatment, waste management recovery and recycling, and environmental consultancy and green ICT.[56]

The pandemic has accelerated the demand for technology literacy and digital skills as well. In our interviews, employers mentioned that a comfort level with digital—along with the requisite skills—is an important expectation in many jobs going forward. These digital skills could include[57]:

Technology literacy
- Social media
- E-commerce
- Online training
- Remote work
- Online selling

> *"Digital-enabled work will now be in high demand during the pandemic. OSY will need to reach a comfort level and be familiar with digital technology which will be the new norm."*
>
> Local business group manager interviewee, Cebu

COVID-19 has not removed the need for work-readiness skills. Research and interviews showed that employers seek topline work-readiness skills to complement digital, and green and blue skills in OSY. For example, as per the World Bank, two-thirds of employers face challenges in finding talent with adequate work ethics.[58]

Work-readiness skills are associated with an increase in average day earnings. An Accenture study found that workers will need digital skills, complemented by soft and cognitive skills, to thrive in the digital economy.[59] An OECD study found that even in technology-intensive contexts, cognitive skills—reasoning, creativity and empathy—are just as important as technical competencies. A World Economic Forum (WEF) study projected that 65% of children entering grade school will work in roles that do not exist today, a change that will require work-readiness skills including creativity, initiative and adaptability.[60]

Top work readiness skills emerging from the research are as follows:

- Communication
- Work ethics
- Curiosity
- Positive values
- Leadership
- Teaming
- Resilience
- Creativity
- Empathy
- Emotional intelligence
- Planning and focus
- Willingness to learn

> *"[Technical] skills can be taught. It is all about the attitude..."*
>
> Restaurant operator interviewee, Cebu

As per interviews, the purple work readiness skills are considered topline skills by the industry employers

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of green and blue skills, which are poised to play an important role in jobs of the future. The pandemic has also accelerated the demand for technology literacy and digital skills. While the need for work-readiness skills has always been there, more and more employers are seeking topline work-readiness skills to complement their technical, and green and blue skills.

2. Increase awareness of technical and vocation educational opportunities

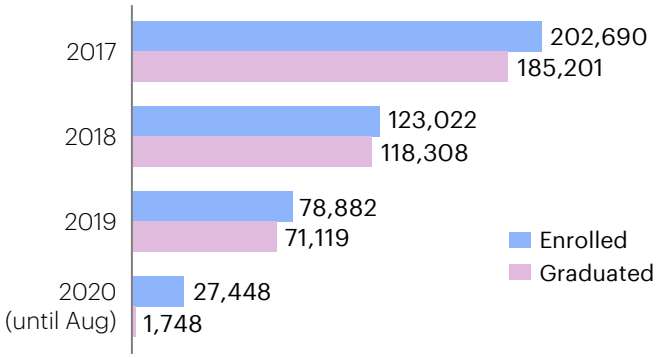
2.2 Raise awareness for ICT as a career opportunity for OSY

The demand for ICT skills is expected to increase over time. The share of value added from the digital economy to the GDP of the Philippines grew from 7% in 2012 to over 10% in 2018.[61] Remarkably, 84% of Philippine enterprises increased their ICT budget in 2020, compared to only 66% in 2019.[62]

An Accenture report estimated that by 2024, roles requiring digital skills will grow by 12%.[63] The three government offices interviewed for this research—DOLE, Department of Education (DepEd) and TESDA—said that there is demand for talent in emerging technologies. During industry consultations conducted by TESDA, key industry players in the Information Technology and Business Process Management (IT-BPM) sector have also expressed the need for workers who are equipped with skills in information technology. ICT is also a medium-term in-demand sector for OSY.[64] This is a significant opportunity area for OSY to capitalize on.

Even though there is a significant opportunity for OSY with increasing demand for ICT skills, the number of participants in ICT-related TVET courses has dwindled over the last two years (Figure 7). One key reason for the decline in 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic. Barriers or challenges faced by OSY in pursuing these trainings and virtual job opportunities include financial constraints to buy tablets or cellphones, connectivity and cybersecurity.[65]

Figure 7: Number of graduates from ICT-related courses[66]



This gap can be bridged by increasing awareness for ICT-related courses and upskilling youth in this area. In Figure 8, some of the pathways depicting in-demand ICT jobs and relevant NCs are listed in order of increasing competency. These certifications can act as important stepping stones to prepare OSY for sustainable ICT jobs. Even though some of these entry-level certifications are NC II or III, they can still be taken without prerequisite by OSY according to TESDA.[67] For instance, from Education Development Center's (EDC's) Mindanao Youth for Development (USAID MYDev) program it has been observed that youth who receive NCs in Animation and Visual Graphic Design typically get successfully hired as graphic artists and animators.

Figure 8: ICT qualifications

OSY can upskill for ICT jobs by taking these ICT qualifications[68]

Relevant jobs	Certifications*
Medical Coder, Transcriptionist	• Medical Transcription NC I • Medical Coding and Claims Processing NC III
Graphic Artist, Animator	• Animation NC II • 2D Animation NC III • 3D Animation NC III • Visual Graphic Design NC III
Game Developer, Gamification	• Game Programming NC III • 2D Game Art Development NC III • 3D Game Art Development NC III
Programmer, Software Developer	• Programming (Net Technology) NC III • Programming (Oracle Database) NC III • Programming (Java) NC III • Web Development NC III
IT Specialist, Technical Support	• Computer System Servicing NC II • Cable TV Installation NC II • Broadband Installation (Fixed Wireless Systems) NC II • Customer Service NC II • Telecom OSP Installation NC II • Cable TV Operation and Maintenance NC III
CAD/CAM Operator	• Technical Drafting NC II • CAD/CAM Operation NC III

* The highlighted jobs and certifications in purple have been identified as the most relevant ICT skills for OSY based on research and EDC recommendations.

The ICT sector is gaining prominence following industry shifts from the pandemic and is expected to grow significantly in the next three to five years. Employers are facing a dearth of people with ICT skills and are expressing a need to hire more people in this area. At the same time, the student participation rates in ICT-related TVET courses are declining. OSY, especially women, can undertake ICT-related certifications to build capabilities for a long-term career in this promising area.

2.3 Promote the value of technical trades to the public

To address outdated views on the value of technical trades, there are several opportunities to organize advocacy and socialization activities on innovative TESDA skills training courses, particularly ICT courses, that are related to in-demand jobs.

These activities should target OSY, along with engaging families and parents as they typically exert major influence in their children's career choices. Other important stakeholders to reach are training institutions, community and local champions, academia, Registered Guidance Counsellors (RGCs), Career Advocates (CAs),

and Career Guidance Advocacy Program (CGAP) focal persons in Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs).[69] TESDA also offers career guidance and counseling programs such as the Skills to Succeed program (career guidance and counseling), which can be used to engage OSY. DepEd has partnered with local government units (LGUs) and PESOs to conduct job fairs in certain localities, where they provide a post-program support for learners, connect them to industries and provide guidance and counseling if needed.

OSY need to associate NCs with higher salaries, so the correlation should be made clear to them. For instance, in the construction and infrastructure sector it has been statistically determined that an NC II holder has a significantly higher salary than a person without an NC.[70] As per TESDA interviews, NCs are often considered equivalent to a college degree. As per the SETG 2019 report by TESDA, the labor force participation rate of the TVET-certified graduates was 72.5%, compared to 66.3% for non-certified graduates.[71]

Certification improves employment prospects domestically and abroad as these certificates are proof of qualifications. Establishing a competency-based pay scheme would increase the number of individuals pursuing vocational education.[72] Such a compensation system rewards building and infrastructure workers with additional pay in exchange for formal certification in accumulation of skills, knowledge or competencies.

Lastly, best practices can be leveraged in outreach and multichannel marketing to effectively reach youth and their families. Adoption of a combination of offline (at the village level) and online channels such as the TESDA mobile app, website and Facebook page—and increasing usage and engagement across these channels—is key.

Socialization programs can be organized to engage youth and their families to improve the awareness and perception of the TESDA programs, especially ICT-related courses. The benefits of NCs and their equivalency with college degree can be highlighted to elevate their perception among youth. Competency-based pay schemes and multichannel marketing through both online and offline channels are some other good options for effectively reaching youth.

2.4 Disadvantaged OSY require targeted interventions

It would be prudent to offer targeted support to disadvantaged OSY, such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and Indigenous Peoples (IPs), to meet their specific needs. The Philippine Association for Citizens with Developmental and Learning Disabilities, Inc. (PACDLD) estimates that of the four million children and youth with disabilities, only 2% attend school.[73]

Massage therapy, bartending, bread and pastry production, computer systems servicing, information technology, food and beverage services, housekeeping and web development are some entry-point jobs for OSY with disabilities.[74] Providing OSY incentives (free meals and transportation stipend) and a sense of belonging can help improve participation.[75] DepEd's Kakaiba-yanihan offers psychosocial support for learners with disabilities affected by COVID-19.[76] Advocacy programs and public campaigns can be strengthened to increase PWDs' enrollment and can help reduce the stigma associated with disabilities.[77]

In its Memorandum of Agreement with the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), TESDA provides free skills training where PWDs participate in the Training for

Work Scholarship Program (TWSP). While provision of relevant training programs for PWDs is important, there is currently no available data that describes how TVET institutions are promoting inclusion and accessibility in the provision of education. TESDA needs to strengthen the advocacy program for PWDs to encourage them to enroll in programs that are applicable to their disability.[78]

Of the estimated 5.1 million IPs under 18 years old in the Philippines, only 1.2 million IP children are enrolled in elementary and high schools.[79]

The Philippines is made up of different indigenous cultural communities and IPs, preserving the rich local culture of the country. As most IPs reside in the most remote areas of the country, information dissemination on available skills training programs in TTIs and technical-vocational institutions (TVIs) can be challenging. The low participation rate of the IPs in TVET programs indicates the need for an intensified campaign in skills training for IPs in the communities. A safe and people-centric community encourages IPs to pursue education.[80]

IPs generally need competencies in agriculture, aquaculture, construction and manufacturing. To increase IP participation rate in TVET programs, there is a need to allot more funding for scholarships for IPs. Going to IP communities and personally introducing the benefit and opportunities of TVET programs for the IPs, including via local champions, is a good strategy to increase their participation in these programs. Producing culturally appropriate media in their local languages such as posters, comics and community plays will be helpful. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) offers several services and run projects for IPs. Data on the number of IPs reached by these programs is scarce, which calls for better data collection to monitor progress.[81]

Disadvantaged OSY such as PWDs and IPs get access to fewer livelihood opportunities. Offering ancillary support is recommended to meet their specific needs. Scholarships, incentives such as free meals and transportation stipend, advocacy programs and intensified public campaigns are some examples of initiatives that can increase the awareness and in turn, participation of the disadvantaged OSY.

2.5 Study ecosystems, communication flows and perceptions to help identify interventions

Conducting a holistic study of the stakeholder ecosystem to identify communications and information flows among them can foster success. It can help identify bottlenecks and the most important challenges regarding the perceptions of OSY and stakeholders. It also can be useful in correcting misperceptions to build trust and confidence in the ecosystem.

Important stakeholders influencing the OSY employment and livelihood prospects include public and private sector employers; government agencies, including DOLE, DepEd, TESDA and PESOs; academia; training institutions; and Youth Development Alliance (YDA).

TESDA executives highlighted that there is an Inter-Agency Committee established to harmonize all skills development programs of the national government. The head of this committee is DTI with TESDA as a co-chair and DepEd as a member. They have a National TVET Trainers Academy (NTTA) that is implementing capacity building programs for TVET trainers and administrators. They also work with industries and other stakeholders to ensure that the TVET trainers have the necessary industry knowledge and experience.[82]

Likewise, DepEd conducts Education Forums every year, where three education agencies, United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), private sector representatives from industries and Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) come together, converse and recommend any future employment projections depending on market demands.[83]

In the interviews, government officials highlighted that regular input from other stakeholders would be appreciated for continuous improvement. Work immersion can be provided by stakeholders to give hands-on experience for OSY. Industry can provide labor market signals that would assist government agencies in developing their programs. PESOs and ALS's career guidance function and DOLE's support can act as intermediaries between employers, OSY and trainers.

Relevance and quality of skills development programs can be enhanced through an ecosystem approach. Government and non-profits can collaborate with industry to jointly conduct trainings for OSY. Existing challenges like lack of equipment or outdated training curriculum can be overcome by sharing resources. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Philippines Business for Education's (PBEd's) YouthWorks PH partnered with the Office of the Vice President of the Philippines, businesses from infrastructure, built environment, food and beverage, manufacturing and ICT sectors, notably, Aboitiz and D.M. Consunji. They offered free technical and vocational training with stipends to over 6,000 unemployed and OSY.[84]

DOLE has an employer engagement program where employers prepare training plans and provision technical training and internships.[85] TESDA is working on TVET to make it competency based, where training programs developed are in sync with the qualifications needed by industries and employers. They conduct Skills Needs Anticipation (SNA) on priority sectors to generate baseline data on critical skills requirement of the industry and organize Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with various stakeholders to validate emerging trends.[86]

Based on youth interviews, a majority indicated the need for additional employment support, including information on job fairs and preparing for job interviews, guidance on preparing a curriculum vitae (CV), applying for National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) clearances and meal and transportation stipend. Most of the youth are interested in learning new skills, yet they have low levels of awareness of about half of existing government programs. Awareness is particularly low for Skills Training for Employment/Entrepreneurship Program (STEEP), Tsuper Iskolar, JobStart and TWSP. For those who are aware of the trainings, some of the major reasons for not participating in them include the risk posed by the pandemic, lack of financial resources and time constraints. TESDA's Private Education Student Financial Assistance (PESFA) scholarship program extends financial assistance to marginalized yet deserving students in TVET courses and assists private institutions in their development efforts by assuring a steady supply of enrolees to their course offerings.[87]

A holistic ecosystem study can identify perceptions and information flows among OSY and stakeholders. Consequently, it can help to address the relevant challenges and areas of opportunity for OSY and stakeholders. It can be an important tool to understand misperceptions and build trust in the ecosystem.

Conclusion

Although the global COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the labor markets, it presents an opportunity to place OSY of all genders and backgrounds on a path to sustainable employment.

Targeting jobs in growth sectors with a high degree of skill adjacencies, a low risk of degree inflation and avenues for upskilling through certifications is key. In tandem, it is crucial to invest in the development of green and blue skills, technology literacy and work readiness skills among OSY.

The pandemic has disproportionately affected women as they work in sectors impacted by the crisis. Gender stereotypes exacerbate the situation—with women leaving or being forced out of employment and education in order to manage household needs during the pandemic. The recommendations in this report seek to empower them to participate in the labor force and increase their earning potential, thereby driving economic growth and fostering gender equality. Women—especially those with children at home—have opportunities for home- and community-based work. If that work dovetails with digital technologies and promotes a green and blue economy, it enhances their chance for good work in the near- and medium-term.

Improving awareness and perception of technical trades, especially those related to ICT, can open up new career pathways. Launching multichannel marketing that advertises the benefits of obtaining NCs and their equivalencies with college degrees, can channel OSY to emerging opportunities via TVET.

As the impact of the pandemic continues to unfold, this research is being taken further. Perceptions and information flows between stakeholders on the education, employment and livelihood of OSY will be analyzed to shape interventions that will enable a more locally resonant and impactful implementation of the recommendations.

Appendix

Research methodology

The analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on opportunities for Out-of-School (OSY) youth utilized multiple methods of research, with an emphasis on both qualitative and quantitative data. Research was conducted leveraging state-of-the-art technologies for digital content data analysis to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the employment landscape for OSY. A social listening analysis was conducted using a tool called NetBase, which analyzed social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) content to identify the job trends and track sentiments related to OSY employment opportunities over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, an online media analysis (across different Philippine media outlets, news reports and press releases) was conducted using a tool called Quid, to capture the media trends and sentiments pertaining to OSY employment before and during COVID-19. A LinkedIn network analysis was also conducted to discover employment trends and opportunities for OSY.

Desk research was based on literature review of labor market information reports, reports from other sources such as multilateral organizations, think tanks, statistical agencies, business groups, academia and development organizations, and Accenture thought leadership, covering the Philippine labor market both before and during COVID-19. Similarly, the demand- and supply-side interviews were conducted for the private sector employers, government agencies and youth who have not completed their formal education (high school or college), across these nine locations: Cagayan De Oro, Cebu, Davao, Manila, Pampanga, Quezon City, Tagbilaran, Valenzuela and Zamboanga.

Digital content data analysis

Social listening

To find out the employment and livelihood opportunities of OSY in the Philippines, selected social media channels were monitored between pre-COVID-19 (October 2019 to mid-March 2020) and during COVID-19 (mid-March 2020 to July 2020). With the help of suitable keywords, the posts and content related to jobs relevant for OSY were analyzed before and during COVID-19. Consequently, the trends in the top jobs across the key sectors emerging during the pandemic were captured. Sentiment analysis was also conducted across the posts and mentions on these platforms. 2,422 posts and mentions across 15 social media sites; 75 Facebook-specific job boards were comparatively analyzed.

The online social listening was conducted with a tool called NetBase. NetBase enables social sentiment analysis, which is the use of Natural Language Processing (NLP) to analyse social conversations online and determine deeper context as they apply to a topic or theme. It also enables social media listening, which involves searching the web and the social space to see what is being said about the topics of interest.

Online media

To find out the most talked about topics of OSY in the Philippines in the media and do a comparative analysis on the changes in the narrative due to COVID-19, two online media analyses were conducted across news agencies, online magazines, press releases and other media sources. The pre-COVID-19 analysis was conducted for the period October 2019 to mid-March 2020, and the during-COVID-19 analysis was for the period of mid-March 2020 to July 2020. The pre-COVID-19 period had 61 stories mentioning/covering the topic whereas the latter had 34 stories. In total, 95 news stories across 24 news agencies, online magazines, press releases and other media sources were analyzed.

The online media analysis was conducted with a tool called Quid. Quid is a contextual Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform that enables deep research on any theme or subject across different media sources to gain a full picture of the overall media narrative. It also generates a sentiment score for the topic by distilling insights from across the different media sources.

LinkedIn network

Linkedn analysis was conducted as an indicative study to identify talent, in-demand occupations and skills in the Philippines across the platform. Employees were analyzed by location, function, industry, skills and job titles to better understand different skill sets, talent availability and labor market trends. It helped to understand the readily available talent pool in the market and analyze skill gaps in the country. More than 60,000 LinkedIn job posts were analyzed from a vast database of more than 6.1 million LinkedIn members in the Philippines.

Interviews

Private sector firms to be interviewed were identified based on desk research and recommendations from EDC and Accenture networks. Similarly, supply-side stakeholders to be interviewed, which comprises youth who have not completed their formal education (high school or college) and government agencies, were identified through PESOs, EDC and Accenture contacts.

Interviews were conducted across all the identified participants, and key findings were documented. Any requirements/data points to be tracked in the future were also documented. The following stakeholders were interviewed in total:

- 25 interviews with private and public sector employers
- Eight interviews with youth who have not completed their formal education
- Three interviews with DOLE, DepEd and TESDA

Desk research

Prominent sectors and other information to inform inputs for interview questions and other data analysis were identified through the literature review of labor market information reports, reports from other sources such as multilateral organizations, think tanks, statistical agencies, business groups, academia and development organizations, and Accenture thought leadership. Reports and articles reflecting changes to the Philippine labor market since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic were shortlisted, with over 33 labor market information reports, and 102 other reports and data sources pertinent to the Philippines reviewed and summarized. More than 12 Accenture workforce development thought leadership reports were also reviewed to identify relevant insights.

Netbase search strings

("youth" AND "NEET") OR "out of school youth" OR "OSY" OR "OSCY" OR "ALS Passer" OR "TESDA Grad" OR "kabataang hindi nakapag-aral" OR "kabataang hindi nakapagtapos ng pag-aaral" OR "high school graduate" OR "istambay" OR "elementary school graduate" OR "secondary school graduate" OR "kabataang walang trabaho" OR "ALS graduate" OR "vocational graduate" OR "vocational diploma" OR "NCII Holder" OR "VocTech Graduate" OR "grade school diploma" OR ("not in employment" AND "youth") OR ("not in employment" AND "Filipinos") OR ("not in employment" AND "Adults") OR ("not in education" AND "youth") OR ("not in education" AND "Filipinos") OR ("not in training" AND "Filipinos") OR ("not in training" AND "youth") OR ("Out of School" AND "Filipinos") OR ("not in education" AND "Adults") OR ("not in training" AND "Adults") OR ("Out of School" AND "Adults")) AND ("Employment" OR "Job" OR "GIG" OR "Work" OR "Part-time" OR "trabaho" OR "kasanayan"OR "Hiring" OR "recruit" OR "livelihood" OR "JobStreetPH" OR "PhilJobNet" OR "#WorkNow" OR "full-time" OR "#WorkFromHome") AND ("Philippines" OR "Metro Manila" OR "Cebu" OR "Davao" OR "Zamboanga" OR "Tagbilaran" OR "Cagayan de Oro" OR "Pampanga" OR "Manila" OR "Quezon City" OR "Valenzuela City")

Quid search strings

("YOUTH NOT IN EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING" OR "YOUTH NEET" OR "YOUTH NOT IN EMPLOYMENT AND NOT INVOLVED IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING" OR "OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH" OR "OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH" OR "OSY" OR "OSCY" OR "OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH" OR "OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH" OR "UNEMPLOYED YOUTH" OR "UNEMPLOYED YOUNG") AND ("EMPLOYMENT" OR "JOB" OR "SKILL" OR "OPPORTUNITY" OR "HIRING" OR "GIG" OR "EARN" OR "WORK") AND ("PHILIPPINES" OR "MANILA" OR "PAMPANGA" OR "CEBU" OR "TAGBILARAN" OR "DAVAO" OR "ZAMBOANGA" OR "CAGAYAN DE ORO" OR "QUEZON CITY" OR "VALENZUELA CITY")

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About EDC

Education Development Center (EDC) is a global nonprofit that advances lasting solutions to improve education, promote health, and expand economic opportunity. Since 1958, we have been a leader in designing, implementing, and evaluating powerful and innovative programs. EDC has expertise in areas such as youth workforce development, early childhood development and learning, as well as suicide prevention. EDC collaborates with public and private partners to create, deliver, and evaluate programs, services, and products. As a leader in developing programs that drive change, Education Development Center has transformed the lives of over 1 billion learners in more than 80 countries.

About Opportunity 2.0

USAID's Opportunity 2.0 (O2) is a five-year program designed to strengthen national and local capability in the Philippines to provide out-of-school youth (OSY) with quality education and learning experiences, inspire life-long-learning, and lead to improved education, livelihood, or employment opportunities. Through the establishment of partnerships and the strengthening of networks in 12 cities across the country, O2 will reach 180,000 out-of-school youth, train over 2,000 teachers and engage 2,200 companies.