

The Current Selected Initiatives of the Philippines on the Key Policies Related to Child Labor

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Abstract

In the Philippines, the worst types of child labor include commercial sexual exploitation, armed conflict, human trafficking, drug trafficking, physical harm, and performing agricultural and mining tasks, among others. For this reason, the researcher aimed to research the Philippines overview of key policies related to child labor to review its initiatives if they are adequate to eliminate child labor, to inform other countries of these selected initiatives to understand the key policies related to child labor in the development of its efforts to eliminate child labor in the Philippines. Some of the Philippines' current initiatives are as follows: the institutionalization of the National Council against Child Labor through Executive No. 92; the 6-year #SafeKidsPH campaign and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program through Republic Act No. 11310. Each initiative has its purpose and its characteristics. The scope of the initiative focuses on the three initiatives mentioned above. The first initiative aims to further support the Philippine Program Against Child Labor, while the second is to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of cases of online child exploitation, and the latter refers to a conditional cash transfer program that focuses on reducing child labor. Specifically discussing each initiative will give the reader a clearer understanding of how each initiative is being implemented, including its coverage, content, and purpose. Knowing these initiatives will encourage other countries to take such initiatives where possible in their own countries.

This paper is a qualitative study in which the researchers reviewed and analyzed all the data collected, such as the relevant documents. In this paper, the researchers discussed this issue constructively and based their summary and conclusion on key policies related to child labor in the Philippines.

Keywords: Child Labor, Policy, Executive no. 92, SafeKidsPH, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino

I. Introduction

The 1987 Philippine Constitution Article 2 Section 13 declares that it is the policy of the State to recognize the vital role of the youth in nation-building and to promote and protect the youth's physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. Thus, the provision protects the young ones in all aspects of their lives and recognizes them as significant in society's welfare and progress.

Every state faces various problems particularly those in underdeveloped countries and one of them is the issue of child labor. According to ILO (2020), there is a decline of 100 million but still, 152 million are in child labor globally.

The worst types of child labor in the Philippines include commercial sexual exploitation, armed conflict, human trafficking, drug trafficking, physical harm, and performing agricultural and mining tasks, among others. (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/philippines>) The PSA (Philippine Statistics Authority) estimates that there are approximately 2.1 million Filipino children aged 5 to 17 years old are in child labor. Approximately 95% of them are engaged in dangerous work. Sixty-nine percent of these are aged 15 to 17 years old, beyond the minimum allowable age for work but still exposed to hazardous work.

Children work on farms and plantations, in dangerous mines, on the streets, in factories, and as child domestic workers in private homes.

Agriculture continues to be the sector with the most child laborers, accounting for 58% of all child laborers.

On the other hand, the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported that in 2018, the Department of Justice Office of Cybercrime received 579,006 cybertips for online sharing, re-sharing, and selling of child sexual abuse images and videos. In 2019, there were 418, 433 cybertips recorded but in 2020, about a 260% increase since the start of the lockdown.

The main objective of this paper is to present the initiatives of the Philippines on the key policies related to child labor. This paper then can give the reader an overview of such initiatives. It can showcase as well the efforts of the Philippine government to eliminate child labor as much as possible. Introducing the three main initiatives of the Philippines such as the Institutionalization of Executive the National Council against Child Labor through Executive No. 92, SafeKidsPH campaign, and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program through Republic Act No. 11310.

II. Discussion on the Initiatives of the Philippines on the Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Institutionalization of the National Council against Child Labor through Executive No. 92

On September 17, 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive No. 92, titled “Institutionalizing the National Council Against Child Labor to Scale Up the Implementation of the Philippine Program Against Child Labor.”

The signed law directed government agencies to establish the National Council Against Child Labor to strengthen the government's efforts to lessen the prevalence of child labor in the country and protect the youth from any illegal employment conducted by various industries and businesses, which, according to the International Labor Organization, deprives them of their childhood,

potential, and dignity. (<https://kcrecruitment.com/duterte-signs-executive-order-no-92-to-combat-child-labor/>)

Members of the Council will come from various government agencies, including but not limited to the Departments of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The signed policy also requires two (2) representatives from the workers, employers, and non-governmental organizations with child labor programs.

Duterte delegated the formulation of frameworks, national plans, and other policies and guidelines to effectively enforce Republic Act (RA) No. 7610, also known as the “Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination,” through Executive Order No. 92. The National Council Against Child Labor is in charge of overseeing the implementation of the "Philippine Program Against Child Labor."

The President reorganized the NCLC (National Child Labor Committee) as the National Council Against Child Labor, which will be led by the Secretary of Labor and Employment (DOLE), with the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) serving as Council Co-Chairperson.

Other responsibilities include monitoring the status of cases involving violations of child labor laws and developing information dissemination and advocacy campaigns to shed light on the inhumane use of children in various industries and businesses.

Executive Order No. 92 also directed the Council to form Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that would use the PPACL - Philippine Program Against Child Labor framework's strategic directions or other frameworks developed by the Council as a foundation. The President directs TWGs to evaluate the PPCL's plan of action and address any gaps that may arise.

SafeKidsPH Campaign

SaferKidsPH, a 6-year awareness campaign on the extent and impact of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines, was formed by the Philippine government in collaboration with an Australian government-led consortium of child rights advocates.

SaferKidsPH calls itself the first consortium formed to reduce OSEC - Online Sexual Exploitation of Children. It promises to work with and encourage cooperation among the participating governments, educational institutions, and communities.

Telecommunications companies such as Globe, **Smart**, Google and YouTube, PLDT, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are all pitching in from the private sector.

Youth volunteers from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also supported such a program.

The SaferKidsPH Program brings together a group of child rights advocates who work with the government, civil society, and the private sector. New technologies, such as live streaming, are increasing the risk of sexual abuse among Filipino children.

Online child abuse is the most common type of cybercrime in the Philippines. New technologies, such as live streaming, are increasing the risk of sexual abuse among Filipino children. Australia is dedicated to advancing children's rights and protecting them from exploitation, abuse, and violence. As a result, the Australian Embassy in the Philippines has launched the SaferKidsPH Program, a six-year, AUD 8 million (PhP 298 million) commitment.

The Australian Federal Police and the UNICEF-led consortium, which includes The Asia Foundation and Save the Children Philippines, received grants through the program.

The Consortium assists with the Philippine government's national plans, such as the National Response Plan to Address Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children led by the DSWD Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography and the Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children led by the Council for the Welfare of Children. OSEC - Online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) refers to child sexual exploitation which is facilitated or takes place through the Internet and other related media.

SaferKidsPH works with children, parents, schools, local groups, businesses, and the media to promote online safety, in line with the government's goal of ending violence against children by 2025. It will improve cybercrime investigation, prosecution, and adjudication. It will also improve services to protect children in high-risk areas. (<https://www.saferkidsph.org>)

Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program through Republic Act No. 11310.

One of the government programs in combating poverty in the Philippines is family aid. To support citizens, even more, the government launched the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in 2007. It was launched as a full-scale cash transfer program in 2008. The 4Ps is a conditional cash transfer program for low-income families. The program provides grants to households as long as certain requirements are met, such as keeping children in school, having regular health check-ups, and having parents or guardians attend Family Development Sessions. Around 20 million Filipinos benefit from the 4Ps program, 9 million of whom are children. As a result, the program reaches approximately 20% of the population intending to reduce poverty. (<https://borgenproject.org/tag/the-pantawid-pamilyang-pilipino-program-4ps/>)

Santiago and Samantha A. Vizconde renamed it Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) on July 16, 2008, by administrative order number 16, series of 2008, and established implementing guidelines. It is the flagship poverty alleviation program of

former President Gloria Macapagal's administration. (Administrative Order No. 16, series of 2008)

Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) is a national government human development program or measures that invest in the health, nutrition, and education of poor households, particularly children aged 0 to 18. This program was continuously implemented by the Aquino and Duterte's administrations.

It is modeled after the conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes that have lifted millions out of poverty in Latin American and African countries.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) serves as the 4Ps' lead government agency. Other agencies such as the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the National Economic and Development Authority act as partners.

The 4Ps program provides 6,000 pesos per year (P500 per month) for health and nutrition expenses to each household chosen by the program. It also provides 3000 pesos per child for a school year (ten months) or 300 pesos per month for educational expenses.

Farmers, fisherfolk, homeless families, indigenous peoples, those in the informal sector, those in geographically isolated areas, and those without electricity are all eligible recipients.

Beneficiaries must be able to enroll in school and maintain an attendance rate of 85 percent or higher at least once per month. Children aged 0 to 5 years old should have regular check-ups. (<https://pantawid.dswd.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RA-11310.pdf>)

Households receive cash grants if their children attend school and receive regular health check-ups, growth monitoring, and vaccines. Pregnant women must receive prenatal care, and their births must be attended by professional health workers. Monthly community-based Family Development Sessions are required for

parents or guardians to learn about positive child discipline, disaster preparedness, and women's rights.

Beneficiaries are chosen objectively through the National Household Targeting System, also known as Listahanan, based on a survey of the physical structure of their homes, the number of rooms and occupants, access to running water, as well as other factors that affect their living conditions.

According to one study, the program has resulted in a 1.4 percentage point reduction in poverty per year, or 1.5 million fewer poor Filipinos. Based on population coverage, the 4Ps is currently the world's fourth-largest CCT program.

(<https://www.bworldonline.com/duterte-signs-bill-making-4ps-a-permanent-function-of-dswd/>)

III. Summary and Conclusion

Based on the discussion on three initiatives of the Philippines on the Key Policies Related to Child Labor, the following are the summary and conclusion:

1. Institutionalization of the National Council against Child Labor through Executive No. 92, SafeKidsPH Campaign and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program through Republic Act No. 11310 are significant initiatives of the Philippine government to help reduce the child labor in the country.

2. In the first initiative which is the Institutionalization of the National Council against Child Labor through Executive No. 92, there is a established National Council Against Child Labor. It's goal is to promote support the Philippine Program Against Child Labor through the partnership of various agencies of the government which are the Members of the Council. The departments involved are as follows: Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Departments of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

3. Monitoring the status of cases involving violations of child labor laws and information dissemination and campaigns for inhumane use of children in various industries and businesses are their responsibilities.

4. Executive Order No. 92 also directed the Council to form Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The role is to utilize the PPACL - Philippine Program Against Child Labor framework's strategic direction and evaluate the plan of action and resolve the possible gaps.

5. SafeKidsPH Campaign is the second initiative. It is a 6-year awareness campaign on the extent and impact of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines, with the support and collaboration of Australian government to the Philippine government with AUD 8 million (PhP 298 million) commitment.

6. The Consortium contributes to national plans of the Philippine government, such as the National Response Plan to Address Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children led by the DSWD Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography and the Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children led by the Council for the Welfare of Children.

7. SaferKidsPH collaborates with children, parents, schools, community groups, businesses, and the media to promote online safety, in line with the government's goal of ending child violence by 2025. It will aid in the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of cybercrime. It will also enhance services aimed at protecting children in high-risk areas.

8. Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program through Republic Act No. 11310 is the third initiative which is one of the government programs in combating poverty in the Philippines.

9. 4Ps pertains to a conditional cash transfer program that focuses on reducing child labor. It is a national government human

development program or measure that invests in the health, nutrition, and education of poor households, particularly children aged 0 to 18.

10. The 4Ps program provides 6,000 pesos per year (P500 per month) for health and nutrition expenses to each household chosen by the program. It also provides 3000 pesos per child for a school year (ten months) or 300 pesos per month for educational expenses.

11. Farmers, fisherfolk, homeless families, indigenous peoples, those in the informal sector, those in geographically isolated areas, and those without electricity are all eligible recipients.

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Article 2 Section 13, Philippine Constitution

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International Labor Organization

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