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Monitoring the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities

PRELIMINARY REPORT PHILIPPINES



Katipunan ng Maykapansanan sa Pilipinas, Inc. (KAMPI)
Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI)
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MONITORING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PRELIMINARY REPORT – PHILIPPINES

EDITORS

MARCIA RIOUX
PAULA PINTO

AUTHORS

MARIETA JANDAYAN
SONIA RINA FIGUEROA
DONDON CANALES



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MONITORING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADEPT - Assisting Disabled and Elderly Persons Who Travel
CBM - Christoffel Blinden Mission
CBR community-based rehabilitation
CHR – Commission on Human Rights
DENR - Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd- Department of Education
DOH - Department of Health
DOLE - Department of Labor and Employment
DRPI – Disability Rights Promotion International
DSWD - Department of Social Welfare and Development
IEC - Information, Education and Communication
KAMPI – Katipunan ng Maykapansanan sa Pilipinas, Inc.
LGUs - Local Government Units
LTO - Land Transportation Office
NCCDP - National Commission Concerning Disabled Persons
NCDA – National Council on Disability Affairs
NCR – National Capital Region
NCWDP - National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons
NDPI Week - National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week
NGAs – National Government Agencies
NIR - Net Incidence Rating which is the difference between positive and negative incidences or experiences of human rights
NRP - .National Rehabilitation Plan
OPDA - Office of Persons with Disabilities Affairs
PESFA - Private Education Student Financial Assistance
PESO - Public Employment Service Offices
PFRD- Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons
PHILSPADA - Philippines Sports Association for the Differently-Abled
PPHB - Philippine Printing House for the Blind
Persons with disabilities – Persons with Disabilities
RBI - Resources for the Blind
RCDA- Regional Councils on Disability Affairs
RCWDP - the Regional Committee for the Welfare of Disabled Persons
STAC - Stimulation and Therapeutic Activity Centers
TESDA - Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
UN CRPD – United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

Foreward

To agree internationally on provisions and standards for human rights is one thing. To live by them is another matter.

The fact that the international community now has fully recognized that the exclusion and discrimination facing people with disabilities is a human rights concern for all nations in the world is of extreme importance for hundreds of millions of people living with a disability. It offers great opportunities to improve their living conditions.

However, real change can only be achieved, if we learn to identify, describe and report human rights violations against people with disabilities. We must use our efforts to develop our capacity in monitoring the situation through a sharp human rights lens. Persons with disabilities themselves must play the major role in this pioneering work. This is what we want to achieve through the Disability Rights Promotion International (D.R.P.I.) project and pilot projects with partners from the disability communities of several countries

This is also the reason why the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has provided us with economic resources for this task.

We want to thank the KAMPI organization, and in particular Marieta Jandayan, Project Coordinator, and all of the people who worked in the Philippines to make this report come alive. It is a model for other similar projects in other countries in which people with disabilities themselves take on the monitoring of their own rights. We hope that it is the beginning of a series of reports that will lead to social justice for people with disabilities in the Philippines.

Bengt Lindqvist

Marcia Rioux

Co-Directors, Disability Rights Promotion International

Acknowledgement

This study is the first of its kind for the PWD sector in the Philippines. As such, several constraints and stumbling blocks have been encountered in the preparation of this study. But these were all overcome because of unselfish support from numerous agencies and individuals. We owe them a lot and could not thank them enough for without their support this study could have not been made possible.

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KAMPI

Executive Summary

In the past, persons with disabilities were often invisible and tended to be viewed as “objects” of protection, treatment and assistance rather than subjects of rights. As a result of this approach, persons with disabilities (persons with disabilities) were excluded from mainstream society, and provided with special schools, sheltered workshops, and separate housing and transportation on the assumption that they were incapable of coping with either society at large or all or most of the major life activities. They were denied equal access to those basic rights and fundamental freedoms (e.g. health care, employment, education, vote, participation in cultural activities) that most people take for granted.

A dramatic shift in perspective has been taking place over the past two decades, and persons with disabilities have started to be viewed as holders of rights. This process is slow and uneven, but it is taking place in all economic and social systems. The rights-based approach to disability essentially means viewing persons with disabilities as subjects of law. Its aim is to empower persons with disabilities and to ensure their active participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life in a way that is respectful and accommodating of their difference. This approach is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to enhancing the promotion and protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities. Strengthening the protection of human rights is also a way to prevent disability. There is no Constitutional definition of disability in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. However, there exists a statutory definition in Section 4 of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act 7277) which defines disability as follows:

(1) A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more psychological, physiological or anatomical function of an individual or activities of such individual; (2) a record of such impairment or (3) being regarded as having such impairment.

The definition is wide enough to include persons who may not traditionally be regarded as disabled. In fact, the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities further defines disabled persons as those who have restrictions or different abilities, as a result of a mental, physical or sensory impairment, in performing an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

In this regard, monitoring of the individual experiences of persons with disabilities has become imperative since it has never been done before in the Philippines. With financial and technical assistance from Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), the Katipunan ng Maykapansanan sa Pilipinas, Inc. (KAMPI) conducted a survey of 100 persons with disabilities in the Philippines during the period October 30 – November 15, 2008. The total sample size was equally distributed among the four major geographic areas or clusters, namely: National Capital Region (NCR or Metro Manila), Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It basically covered the entire country. The survey was conducted by persons with disabilities themselves.

Based on the narrations of the one hundred respondents who participated in this survey, it is now evident that over the last five years violations of human rights have taken place for many people with disabilities in the Philippines. Violations occurred in the family, school, work, community and every facet of life. Human rights violations were found to be particularly frequent in situations related to participation in social, political and cultural activities and most often involved overt

discrimination and unequal treatment, disrespect for difference, erosion of dignity, denial of accessibility and exclusion. Persons with disabilities reporting higher incidence of human rights violations were female belonging to the lower and middle income class and those working as office clerks, massage workers, and unskilled workers or laborers whether in urban or rural areas. Despite all of these, however, only a handful of victims of human rights violations reported them to proper authorities primarily due to lack of confidence that something positive will happen, lack of knowledge on how and where to report, avoidance of trouble, and the fatalistic attitude of most Filipinos to raise up problems and abuse to the Lord. For some respondents disabilities are even considered as gifts from God as well as the will of God according to divine plans. As a result, reports on human rights violations against persons with disabilities have been a very rare occurrence in the Philippines, in the period from 2003-2008.

A review of disability rights protection and mechanisms in the country showed that the Philippines has significant infrastructure (laws, institutions, programs, activities, expressed commitments & advocacy in international and local settings, non-governmental organizations of persons with disabilities, etc.) to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. In fact, it seems that there is nothing more that persons with disabilities in the Philippines could ask for. In short, in paper it is like a haven for persons with disabilities.

However, based alone on the respondents to this survey people with disabilities have not evidenced the promises of the policy and programs in place to ensure their rights. Why is this happening despite the presence of all sorts of infrastructures for the welfare of Persons with disabilities? The answer is not clear. The survey covered only persons with disabilities and no interviews were carried out with those responsible for the implementation of the laws, policies and programs that promise that rights will be respected. We could only infer that perhaps there is still need for more of the ingredients that would transform the legal provisions, programs, activities, commitments, advocacy, etc. that are very convincing in paper into tangible outputs that would directly benefit persons with disabilities and their families. What are those ingredients? We are not also sure but we could suggest that a close monitoring of those policies and programs could help to move towards a more systemic implementation of the policies. It also requires perseverance, willpower and determination on the part of the government.

Given the wide gap found in this study between the prescriptions of existing laws and policies and the reality on the ground the following measures are considered of **immediate necessity**:

- Implement and enforce the provisions of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, UN CRPD and other pertinent laws on persons with disability with perseverance, willpower and determination, notably through awareness-raising campaigns directed to the general population, institutions (business, educational, health, etc.), local government al units and all government agencies, as well as to persons with disabilities themselves and their organizations. As one respondent put it:

There is already the Magna Carta for persons with disabilities. There is penalty for mocking persons with disability. And there should be awareness campaigns in the community.... The community should be made aware. Because even if there is a law, people are not aware..

- Provide immediate economic relief to persons with disabilities and their families, as this study participant expressed:

First I need livelihood assistance. For example, I dream of having a clinic where we can do our service so that people who want to have a massage will just go to our clinic.

- Eliminate barriers to participation in social life (particularly in the public transport system), and tackle disability discrimination in access to education and the labour market so that people with disabilities can live lives with dignity and equality.

I hope they would allot seats to persons with disabilities in transportations. I also hope they would have an association that would discipline their members about [their treatment of] persons with disabilities, so that they would pay enough attention.

- Adopt a cross-disability focus to address the needs and human rights of all persons with disabilities and not just a few groups; This sentiment is echoed on the following excerpts:

... One more thing, the government seems to see other kinds of disabilities more than the deaf. We see ramps and elevators all over the city and that's really great. But how about the deaf, there are a lot of Filipino deaf here...

- In all measures considered to uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities prioritize the most disadvantaged groups to improving their socio-economic status. These are the lower and middle income groups, non-professionals, particularly women, and those 18-40 years old.

These specific recommendations reflect the key issues and concerns of organizations of the Filipino Disability Movement, particularly KAMPI, which further advocate for political action and greater collaboration of efforts by Government, people with disabilities and their organizations to promote shared responsibility and accountability among sectors in all future development of policies, programs and services to advance the human rights of persons with disabilities in the Philippines .

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

Katipunan ng Maykapansanan sa Pilipinas, Inc. (KAMPI) is a federation of cross-disability self-help grassroots organizations of Persons With Disabilities. Recognized as the “National Federation of organizations of people with disabilities in the Philippines”, it was established on November 1990 to serve as the network that will give people with disabilities a voice in pushing for the implementation of relevant programs and policies for the sector. KAMPI’s mission is to work for fully instituted structural changes and adjustments in society that would eliminate all barriers that hinder full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

There have been considerable legislative achievements in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the Philippines. For instance, ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace was adopted in 2001. It works to increase knowledge on the training and employment of people with disabilities, by carrying out applied research relating to policy and practice, compiling and disseminating information, publishing guidelines and manuals, and sponsoring other research and reports. Likewise, the Republic Act 7277 also known as The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons was passed in 1992. It supports the rehabilitation, development and provision of opportunities for people with disabilities and their integration into the mainstream of society. It created a national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against PWD to bring them into the social and economic mainstream of Philippine society. More recently the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities has been adopted. This adoption was a major step forward for the cause of people with disabilities all over the world.

Despite the disability rights and protections endorsed in the laws and policies of the Philippine State, people with disabilities in this country confront many barriers to access education, employment and health and community services and goods, and are denied a life with quality and dignity. Many live in absolute poverty. To document and raise awareness about the kinds of rights abuses and violations that they experience in their everyday lives has become a social and political priority.

Disability Rights Promotion International (D.R.P.I.) is a collaborative project working to establish a monitoring system to address disability discrimination globally. Launched in 2002 DRPI has developed a set of monitoring tools, training instruments, and data collection methodologies to assess the human rights of people with disabilities in the global world. Through partnerships in various countries around the world, including Kenya, Cameroon, India, Bolivia, Canada, Australia and now the Philippines, DRPI has been engaged in disability rights training and monitoring activities that address important needs and issues in each country’s unique context. The work of DRPI is based on the fulfillment of four principles: involvement of people with disabilities and their organizations in all aspects of the monitoring process, cross-disability, comprehensive and holistic approach in monitoring projects, and capacity building in the field of monitoring. Monitoring projects are conducted from a human rights perspective which means that human rights norms and principles are taken as standards in the assessment of policy and legal systems, individual experiences, and social representations of disability. In its monitoring work D.R.P.I. follows a ‘twin-track approach’ that recognizes the protection and promotion of disability rights, not only in the disability-specific Convention, but within all existing international human

rights instruments. Specifically, the following general principles guide the monitoring work developed in the context of DRPI projects:

(a) Dignity

Dignity refers to the inherent worth of every person. Human rights are about protecting and promoting the dignity of all people.

(b) Autonomy

Autonomy is the right of an individual to make his or her own choices independently. Autonomy means that the person is placed at the centre of all decisions affecting him or her.

(c) Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility

Inclusion involves organizing systems of society, both public and private, to enable all people to participate fully and effectively. To achieve full participation, an accessible, barrier-free physical and social environment is necessary. This includes access to transportation; election access; access to water supply and sanitation; technology access; appropriate sources of communication and media to ensure information.

(d) Non-Discrimination & Equality

The principle of non-discrimination means that all rights are guaranteed to everyone, without distinction, exclusion or restriction based on disability or race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, age, or any other status. Discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the purpose or effect of denying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by persons with disabilities, on an equal footing, of all human rights and basic freedoms.

Equality does not mean that women, people of colour or people with disabilities will become the *same* as men, white people or people without a disability. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female, white or black, without or with a disability. Equality, in the context of disability requires creating societal conditions that allow for difference while addressing disadvantage, in order to guarantee the equal participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society.

(e) Respect for Difference:

Respect for difference involves acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity. Despite some visible or apparent differences, all people have the same rights and dignity. The responsibility to change falls not on the individual but on the State and civil society who must accept diversity and respond to the difference that disability represents.

All of the general human rights principles apply equally to men, women, boys and girls.

Objectives of the Project¹

The DRPI-Philippines project aims at monitoring the human rights situation of people with disabilities in the Philippines. It involves an environmental scan of the laws and policies in place in the Filipino territory that protect and promote the human rights of people with disabilities and an overview of the disability movement in the country. It further encompasses the analysis of personal stories collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews with people with disabilities in different regions of the nation to document their human rights experiences. Monitoring the human rights situation of people with disabilities is a necessary step to understand whether the legal and policy instruments in place are adequate and effective on the ground, as well as to determine the extent of human rights violations affecting the disability sector in different regions of the country.

The elaboration and dissemination of monitoring reports constitutes an important objective of this project. Reports on the data collected and analyzed, such as this one, will be disseminated to the many diverse organizations of people with disabilities, other individual persons, groups or organizations that are working to improve the lives of people with disabilities, groups who have a key interest in human rights for all people, the media, government agencies and legislators. The reports provide society with information about violations of the rights of people with disabilities; they address existing infringements of disability rights and provide information to prevent future rights violations of people with disabilities. They can serve as the tangible evidence to support advocacy for changes in laws, policies, and programs to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Most importantly, the reports provide a benchmark to monitor the Philippine government's progress in fulfilling the commitments it has made to people with disabilities through its ratification of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Finally, this project has sought to develop a sustainable system to ensure that disability rights data collection continues beyond the duration of this particular initiative. This has been achieved by creating networks of people to monitor disability rights and by building monitoring capacity within those networks. The project has therefore contributed to the development of a technical infrastructure to sustain the collection, analysis and storage of data to monitor the human rights of people with disabilities in the future. Article 33 of the CRPD requires governments to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Convention, and urges State Parties to involve

¹ More detailed information describing the organizational structure of the project can be found in Annex A.

people with disabilities in this process. This project provides people with disabilities and their organizations with the necessary tools to undertake that task.

Research questions:

Specifically, this project attempted to find answers to three broad questions.

- 1) What are the laws and policy mechanisms in the Philippines to protect and advance the human rights of people with disabilities?
- 2) How are people with disabilities experiencing their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights?
- 2) How is the exercise of rights by people with disabilities affected by intersecting forms of disadvantage such as gender, ethnicity, geographic location, age, education level and income level?

Methodology**Research Design**

The project used a multi-method approach combining multiple research techniques and methodologies, notably:

1. At the **Systems Level**: Collection and review of relevant Philippine legislation as well as of information on the Filipino Disability Movement and on other national government agencies who are central to the provision of programs for people with disabilities; gathering and analysis of data on current socio-economic demographics.
2. At the **Individual Level**: Collection and analysis of individual human rights experiences of people with disabilities through fieldwork in four research sites. The fieldwork involved face to face interviews with people with disabilities in their actual places or location, conducted by trained monitors who are themselves people with disabilities. One hundred ten (110) interviews were conducted in the four identified sites.

Methodologies for Monitoring at the Individual Level**Sampling**

The project's Management Team chose four areas in the Philippines: National Capital region (NCR), Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, to be the monitoring study sites. The sites reflected the diversity of cultures in terms of dialects, ethnicity, levels of overall poverty, levels of literacy, access to technology, information and communication.

The team used a snowball sampling technique to identify research participants. Statistically speaking, snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure, most often used in qualitative research, that allows access to difficult to reach, marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities. A small group (5-6 people) was identified as potential interviewees at the outset of the project through contacts in local organizations of people with disabilities. At the end of each interview, the monitors asked the interviewee if they would recommend someone else to be interviewed. The next people interviewed would be selected from these recommendations. In each site, 25-30 persons with disability were interviewed. The sample balanced for gender, age (18+), educational attainment, type of disability and social status.

Total sample size of the survey was one hundred (100) PWDs equally distributed among the 4 major geographic groups or clusters, namely:

National Capital Region (NCR or Metro Manila) - 25

Luzon - 25

Mindanao - 25

Visayas – 25

Persons with disabilities as Monitors

The involvement of organizations of people with disabilities and people with disabilities individually in all aspects of the monitoring projects is a foundational principle of all DRPI projects. The monitors who conducted the interviews were persons with disabilities themselves who had received intensive training on human rights principles and interview techniques in the context of this project. As in the past, the presence of monitors who are themselves people with disabilities helped interviewees to disclose their personal stories and to feel safe while describing very intimate and often painful experiences

Data Collection and Analysis

To assist with data collection at the Individual Level a monitoring tool was provided by DRPI. The tool uses the standards defined in international human rights instruments, including the UN Disability Convention to collect individual human rights experiences of people with disabilities.

The tool consists of a series of close-ended and semi-structured questions which were developed to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity to tell their own story and to identify those rights issues that are most important to them. Time reference of individual experiences was the last 5 years.

With the informed consent of the interviewees, interviews were audio-recorded and some were video-taped (when both the monitor and the interviewee had hearing impairments). The recorded interviews were then transferred to CD for transcribing, translation to English and data processing. Detailed records of interviewees' demographic characteristics and experiences were also gathered at each site. (See appendices for a copy of the monitoring tool entitled *Interview Questionnaire*).

Data processing was done using NVivo 8, on the basis of a Coding Scheme provided by DRPI.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is the first of its kind for the disability sector in the Philippines. For the first time people with disabilities were given the opportunity to voice their rights' experiences, and make recommendations for social and political change. Coverage of the survey could be considered nationwide since it encompassed the four major geographic areas, i.e., National Capital Region, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Since the purpose of this project has been to describe and document situations of realization and/or violation of human rights, as these are experienced by persons with disabilities, this study has taken a qualitative approach. In studies of qualitative nature, the validity of the study is not determined by its margin of error (as in quantitative research), but by the credibility of the results from the perspective of the participants in the research process. The results are not intended to be generalized as representative of the Filipino population with disability, as would be the case with a large scale quantitative survey. Instead, data elicited with this project stand on their own, as powerful illustrations of the kinds of violations, abuses, but also achievements of persons with disabilities in the Philippines.

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE PHILIPPINES

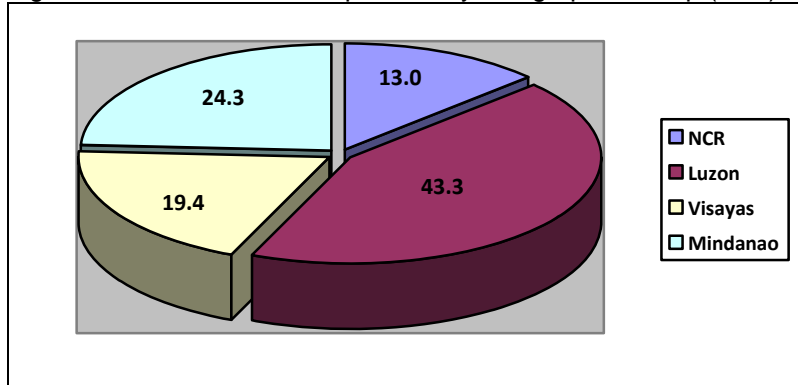
1.1 Socio-Economic Situation

Philippines is an archipelagic country composed of 7,107 islands with a combined land area of 32,489,480.79 hectares. It consists of 17 regions, 81 provinces, 136 cities, 1,495 municipalities and 41,995 barangays (village, the smallest political unit) as of September 2008. Total population stood at 88.575 million as of 2007 census with average annual growth rate of 2.04% during the census period 2000-2007. The 17 regions are grouped into 4 major geographic areas, namely:

- National Capital Region (NCR) - comprising of entire Metro Manila
- Luzon - comprising of Regions 1-5 + CAR
- Visayas - comprising of Regions 6-8
- Mindanao - comprising of Regions 9-13 + ARMM

Based on 2007 census, NCR has a total population of 11.6 million which accounts for 13.0% of the national population. Luzon has the highest population of 38.2 million or 43.2% of the total while Visayas has 17.2 million or 19.4%. Mindanao posted population of 21.6 million, equivalent to 24.3% of the national total. Details are presented in Table 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Distribution of Population by Geographic Group (in %)



The government is estimating around 8.4 million Filipinos (all ages) with various types of disabilities as of 2005, which is consistent with international trend of about 10% of the country's population. Based on the Philippine Registry for Persons with Disabilities conducted by the Dept. of Health in 2005 wherein a total of 508,270 persons with disabilities were registered, a little more than half (54.6%) of persons with disabilities are male. Orthopedic top the list of disabilities with 25.7% share followed by communications (17.3%), visual (16.2%), multiple (11.8%), mental (10.2%), chronic illness (9.9%), psychosocial (6.5%), and learning (2.5%). Note, however, that there is a lingering issue on the classification of disabilities used by different government agencies involved in various concerns for persons with disabilities which could partly be attributed to the catch-all definition of persons with disabilities in the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277).

Table 1.1: Philippine Population by Region, Census Years 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2007

Area	2007 (Aug 1)	2000 (May 1)	1995 (Sep 1)	1990 (May 1)
Philippines	88,574,614	76,504,077	68,616,536	60,703,206
National Capital Region	11,553,427	9,932,560	9,454,040	7,948,392
Cordillera Administrative Region	1,520,743	1,365,412	1,254,838	1,146,191
Ilocos Region	4,545,906	4,200,478	3,803,890	3,550,642
Cagayan Valley	3,051,487	2,813,159	2,536,035	2,340,545
Central Luzon	9,720,982	8,030,945	6,932,570	6,199,017
Southern Tagalog	-	-	-	8,263,099
IVA- Calabarzon	11,743,110	9,339,618	7,750,204	
IVB - Mimaropa	2,559,791	2,299,229	2,033,271	
Bicol Region	5,109,798	4,686,669	4,325,307	3,910,001
Western Visayas	6,843,643	6,211,038	5,776,938	5,393,333
Central Visayas	6,398,628	5,706,953	5,014,588	4,594,124
Eastern Visayas	3,912,936	3,610,355	3,366,917	3,054,490
Western Mindanao	3,230,094	2,831,342	2,567,651	2,459,690
Northern Mindanao	3,952,437	3,505,708	3,197,059	2,197,554
Southern Mindanao	4,156,653	3,676,163	3,288,824	4,006,731
Central Mindanao	3,829,081	3,222,169	2,846,966	2,032,958
ARMM	4,120,795	2,803,045	2,362,300	1,836,930
Caraga ^{1/}	2,293,480	2,095,367	1,942,687	1,764,297
Filipinos in Philippine Embassies/Consulates and Missions Abroad	2,279	2,851	2,830	5,212

1/ Created into a region under RA No. 7901 dated February 23, 1995, taken from Regions 10 and 11.

Note: In 2000, the population of disputed areas was reported in the next higher geographic level. For example, the population of province A claimed both Province A and B will be reflected in the region, but not in Province A nor Province B. This explains the discrepancy when one sums up the province details which is less than the regional totals.

Source: National Statistics Office.

Based on the annual per capita poverty threshold income of P15,057 (roughly US\$376.4 based on P40:\$1 exchange rate) almost 27% of Filipinos or 4.7 million belong to poor families in 2006. The incidence of poverty per area is presented in Table 1.2 while the summary is as follows:

	<u>Poverty Incidence</u>
NCR	7.1%
Luzon	32.4%
Visayas	34.0%
Mindanao	40.2%

Table 1.2: Annual Per Capita Poverty Thresholds, Poverty Incidence and Magnitude of Poor Families, 2000, 2003 and 2006

Region/Province	Annual Per Capita Poverty Threshold (in Pesos)			Poverty Incidence Among Families (%)						Magnitude of Poor Families					
				Estimates (%)			Coefficient of Variation			Estimates			Coefficient of Variation		
	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
PHILIPPINES	11,458	12,309	15,057	27.5	24.4	26.9	1.6	1.3	1.3	4,146,663	4,022,695	4,677,305	1.6	1.4	1.3
NCR	15,722	16,737	20,566	5.8	4.8	7.1	8.2	9.2	6.6	127,655	110,864	167,316	8.8	10.1	7.9
1st District	16,218	17,223	20,868	5.8	3.8	7.4	21.6	25.9	18.5	19,257	13,530	27,468	22.0	27.0	20.3
2nd District	15,727	16,715	20,085	4.1	5.8	6.3	16.5	16.9	12.3	30,701	29,282	52,673	17.3	21.4	17.1
3rd District	15,090	16,298	20,908	9.4	5.0	9.8	13.8	17.2	11.5	47,206	40,811	51,847	14.8	17.7	11.9
4th District	16,359	17,137	20,582	4.9	4.5	5.6	15.6	15.1	13.2	30,491	27,241	35,327	18.6	16.2	13.9
Region I	12,687	13,281	15,956	29.5	24.4	26.2	5.4	6.0	5.4	237,910	213,846	248,443	6.2	6.2	5.9
Ilocos Norte*	13,143	12,893	16,024	18.2	19.6	17.1	18.7	19.4	27.8	19,466	21,694	20,362	22.4	20.1	28.6
Ilocos Sur	13,515	12,824	16,922	30.4	22.8	27.2	9.4	19.0	6.4	35,189	28,302	35,779	11.5	19.1	7.1
La Union	12,978	13,356	16,372	33.2	24.6	27.6	14.0	12.7	17.6	42,654	33,163	40,641	14.3	13.4	18.1
Pangasinan	12,363	13,412	15,656	30.8	25.8	27.6	7.4	7.6	6.3	140,601	130,687	151,660	8.6	8.0	7.2
Region II	11,128	11,417	13,791	25.3	19.3	20.5	7.9	5.8	6.9	143,421	113,298	126,726	8.0	6.0	7.1
Batanes	15,264	12,279	14,970	10.4	6.3	-	36.5	a	a	348	225	-	35.7	a	a
Cagayan	10,209	10,320	12,928	21.5	16.5	19.3	14.6	11.1	13.8	42,062	33,437	41,175	16.2	10.8	14.9
Isabela	11,616	11,808	14,124	30.2	23.9	24.4	11.1	7.1	8.5	79,001	64,397	69,434	10.6	7.5	8.3
Nueva Vizcaya*	11,611	11,880	14,325	16.5	9.2	12.7	28.8	27.4	24.3	12,501	7,252	10,704	29.0	29.5	26.0
Quirino*	10,713	12,463	14,665	31.4	24.1	15.9	16.7	31.2	30.3	9,508	7,987	5,414	16.3	26.8	30.8
Region III	13,760	14,378	17,298	17.3	13.4	16.8	6.2	6.5	5.1	268,558	242,820	320,109	6.8	6.6	5.5
Aurora*	11,405	12,898	16,275	26.9	29.2	31.6	9.8	59.0	47.1	9,638	10,951	12,826	9.7	56.9	49.8
Bataan*	12,434	13,607	15,538	9.9	10.2	6.8	16.8	22.2	33.0	10,958	12,594	8,679	17.6	24.4	32.8
Bulacan	13,882	15,027	17,768	5.4	8.5	10.0	15.7	14.7	11.6	21,801	44,800	56,008	16.1	14.7	13.4
Nueva Ecija	14,750	14,394	17,830	27.6	22.2	32.0	9.3	12.1	7.6	90,754	81,038	121,010	11.0	12.9	8.5
Pampanga	14,698	15,148	17,243	14.4	10.5	8.3	13.2	13.8	12.2	48,461	40,661	34,405	15.2	14.2	13.6
Tarlac	12,578	13,866	16,463	27.6	14.8	22.1	18.5	11.9	11.5	56,095	34,102	53,338	22.5	11.4	11.5
Zambales	12,733	12,754	16,685	23.7	13.4	22.6	10.6	17.4	18.0	30,852	18,674	33,841	11.3	18.1	19.4

Table 1.2: Annual Per Capita Poverty Thresholds, Poverty Incidence and Magnitude of Poor Families, 2000, 2003 and 2006 (cont.)

Region/Province	Annual Per Capita Poverty Threshold (in Pesos)			Poverty Incidence Among Families (%)						Magnitude of Poor Families					
				Estimates (%)			Coefficient of Variation			Estimates			Coefficient of Variation		
	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
Region IV-A	13,670	14,720	17,761	15.2	14.5	16.7	7.3	5.8	4.3	272,484	316,911	374,952	7.6	5.8	4.2
Batangas	15,192	15,957	19,616	20.7	24.5	25.6	11.0	5.6	8.1	71,045	99,383	108,782	14.1	6.1	7.8
Cavite	14,742	16,150	18,718	10.2	8.6	7.8	16.0	15.8	14.1	38,084	44,707	42,077	15.8	16.4	13.8
Laguna	12,937	13,921	17,724	8.1	8.4	10.6	14.4	14.6	10.4	31,303	39,339	50,689	16.2	13.5	10.4
Quezon	12,501	13,349	16,125	32.9	32.8	38.4	14.0	11.9	7.6	112,630	118,941	146,188	14.1	12.3	6.6
Rizal	13,676	13,903	17,464	5.6	3.4	6.4	21.3	19.0	14.6	19,422	14,542	27,217	21.6	19.4	14.9
Region IV-B	12,013	12,402	14,800	36.4	39.9	43.7	7.4	4.7	5.0	162,668	199,485	238,489	7.0	5.5	6.6
Marinduque	11,553	11,781	14,041	42.7	38.3	40.8	8.2	11.6	13.2	18,311	17,669	20,587	10.2	13.1	11.8
Occidental Mindoro	11,745	12,522	14,219	38.1	40.9	46.5	11.5	14.8	15.6	28,248	34,557	42,660	11.8	18.8	24.7
Oriental Mindoro	13,510	13,813	16,723	39.8	37.0	47.1	18.9	7.8	7.0	52,623	53,094	74,307	17.1	11.3	9.2
Palawan	11,163	11,591	13,850	24.7	43.1	40.8	14.5	8.4	9.9	35,749	73,049	74,770	14.3	7.8	11.8
Romblon	10,758	11,769	13,832	52.2	37.5	41.9	10.5	10.6	7.8	27,737	21,116	26,165	10.6	11.0	10.5
Region V	11,375	12,379	15,015	45.3	40.6	41.8	4.2	3.6	3.5	407,176	383,625	422,278	4.7	4.3	4.3
Albay	12,144	12,915	16,128	40.3	34.4	37.8	11.5	8.1	8.4	83,398	76,200	88,676	11.2	8.5	10.1
Camarines Norte	11,505	12,772	14,854	52.7	46.1	38.4	10.9	14.4	18.8	50,670	44,874	39,421	11.8	14.0	22.6
Camarines Sur	11,054	11,873	14,634	40.8	40.1	41.2	9.3	7.0	5.6	120,762	121,936	134,599	11.8	7.7	6.6
Catanduanes*	11,587	11,815	13,654	43.9	31.8	37.3	10.9	10.3	22.1	18,541	13,604	16,999	10.4	29.3	33.3
Masbate	11,019	12,504	14,248	61.3	55.9	51.0	5.8	5.7	6.5	83,660	81,804	80,512	5.9	7.4	8.0
Sorsogon	11,146	12,452	15,687	41.4	33.7	43.5	7.3	10.3	5.4	50,146	45,207	62,071	7.6	14.5	5.6
Region VI	11,314	12,291	14,405	36.7	31.4	31.1	4.0	4.2	4.3	444,172	397,073	425,571	4.5	4.3	4.4
Aklan	11,527	11,980	15,150	36.3	33.5	42.6	15.2	10.8	4.0	31,386	31,068	42,271	18.8	11.2	6.8
Antique	10,938	11,377	14,650	35.1	43.4	43.0	8.1	10.6	14.8	32,393	42,389	46,005	7.8	11.8	16.3
Capiz	10,536	11,298	14,242	40.8	21.6	24.3	9.6	13.3	9.3	53,542	28,711	34,986	9.7	11.7	7.5
Guimaras	10,759	11,694	14,811	22.6	32.7	35.2	18.7	13.2	13.3	5,900	9,525	11,097	18.7	29.0	29.1
Iloilo	12,122	13,221	14,810	29.7	31.1	24.1	7.8	9.2	10.1	108,241	121,067	100,759	9.4	9.4	10.0
Negros Occidental	11,126	12,131	13,975	41.6	31.4	33.4	6.5	6.0	6.6	212,710	164,313	190,455	7.1	6.3	6.6

Table 1.2: Annual Per Capita Poverty Thresholds, Poverty Incidence and Magnitude of Poor Families, 2000, 2003 and 2006 (cont.)

Region/Province	Annual Per Capita Poverty Threshold (in Pesos)			Poverty Incidence Among Families (%)						Magnitude of Poor Families					
				Estimates (%)			Coefficient of Variation			Estimates			Coefficient of Variation		
	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
Region VII	9,659	9,805	13,390	31.5	23.6	30.3	5.9	5.5	4.2	348,154	286,478	391,484	6.9	5.6	4.7
Bohol	9,762	10,032	13,610	50.2	29.2	38.8	9.4	12.8	9.0	105,470	65,953	92,354	11.9	13.0	10.9
Cebu	9,914	10,222	13,960	26.2	17.1	23.5	8.7	8.3	5.3	170,929	125,346	184,207	10.5	8.3	5.4
Negros Oriental	8,981	9,017	12,159	29.7	37.1	43.7	14.7	9.2	8.4	66,788	89,654	110,724	14.5	9.8	10.5
Siquijor*	8,892	9,767	12,733	28.6	30.9	22.3	15.9	13.3	24.9	4,967	5,525	4,199	15.8	13.2	27.7
Region VIII	9,530	10,804	13,974	37.6	35.3	40.7	5.8	4.7	5.3	276,878	266,423	331,426	6.8	5.5	6.0
Biliran*	9,858	11,144	12,028	33.3	46.5	31.4	18.3	13.4	23.7	9,531	13,709	10,077	18.2	43.2	48.8
Eastern Samar	9,108	11,025	13,873	45.9	33.9	42.7	7.1	19.3	18.3	34,037	25,754	35,403	7.1	16.5	16.9
Leyte	9,447	10,600	13,919	34.9	34.6	40.5	11.9	6.4	7.3	118,200	117,288	147,900	14.3	6.9	8.7
Northern Samar	8,898	9,945	14,275	39.8	33.8	52.2	12.3	17.7	16.0	37,591	34,696	56,901	12.7	21.6	20.4
Southern Leyte	9,459	10,668	13,998	26.3	31.9	29.0	12.1	11.7	13.7	19,277	24,064	23,634	12.4	16.3	12.2
Western Samar	10,338	11,675	13,869	45.5	38.7	40.2	9.5	9.2	11.3	58,242	50,913	57,510	10.1	10.2	10.2
Region IXb	9,128	10,407	13,219	38.6	44.0	40.2	7.0	4.6	5.5	209,842	258,497	250,696	8.2	5.2	6.0
Zamboanga del Norte	9,417	10,871	13,947	47.0	64.6	63.0	12.0	6.5	8.1	78,059	110,831	115,560	10.3	7.1	9.1
Zamboanga del Surc	8,975	10,310	12,741	34.9	34.4	29.0	9.1	7.1	8.9	131,783	103,323	91,614	11.6	7.4	9.2
Zamboanga Sibugay	d	9,580	12,188	d	40.7	34.0	d	13.9	14.8	d	40,712	36,868	d	18.6	16.8
Isabela City*	e	10,429	14,115	e	24.7	43.0	e	45.1	22.1	e	3,630	6,655	e	51.1	37.0
Region X	10,509	11,605	14,199	38.0	37.7	36.1	4.5	5.3	5.0	261,501	278,538	285,054	5.0	4.6	5.1
Bukidnon	9,201	11,083	12,186	33.4	36.9	29.6	11.3	13.9	11.2	67,599	79,985	68,973	12.3	9.1	10.3
Camiguin	12,155	12,109	16,145	54.2	34.5	39.3	10.5	21.7	8.2	7,826	5,356	6,619	10.5	40.4	13.3
Lanao del Norte	11,296	12,103	15,225	49.3	46.5	44.1	6.7	7.9	11.5	75,376	73,114	72,484	8.8	7.8	12.2
Misamis Occidental	10,184	11,711	14,555	46.8	48.1	48.8	7.8	11.7	9.6	45,954	50,189	54,247	10.0	13.2	11.3
Misamis Oriental	11,176	11,594	14,787	29.3	28.5	31.5	9.3	6.7	7.0	64,745	69,895	82,730	9.3	7.7	8.1
Region XI	10,278	11,399	14,942	27.9	28.5	30.6	8.5	5.8	5.0	202,121	231,068	257,554	9.4	5.8	5.5
Davao del Nortef	10,566	11,833	15,753	39.5	30.3	37.7	12.2	7.8	10.4	105,169	49,251	62,669	15.7	9.8	11.9

Table 1.2: Annual Per Capita Poverty Thresholds, Poverty Incidence and Magnitude of Poor Families, 2000, 2003 and 2006 (cont.)

Region/ Province	Annual Per Capita Poverty Threshold (in Pesos)			Poverty Incidence Among Families (%)						Magnitude of Poor Families						
				Estimates (%)			Coefficient of Variation			Estimates			Coefficient of Variation			
				2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006	2000
Davao del Sur	9,987	11,470	14,452	18.3	24.2	23.0	13.3	8.2	8.3	68,084	103,963	101,644	12.3	8.4	9.1	
Davao Oriental	9,906	10,580	13,741	33.7	37.2	40.8	13.8	18.2	12.6	28,868	33,443	39,088	14.5	17.9	14.6	
Compostela Valley	g	11,422	15,822	g	34.4	39.8	g	17.1	9.7	g	44,410	54,153	g	14.6	9.6	
Region XII	10,458	11,328	14,225	40.7	32.1	33.8	6.1	5.4	4.8	264,301	227,093	253,009	7.1	5.6	5.1	
North Cotabato	9,990	10,972	13,315	41.6	26.1	27.7	9.5	11.9	12.3	79,750	52,759	59,940	10.4	11.3	12.7	
Saranggani	10,419	10,846	13,746	48.4	44.4	44.8	22.1	8.7	10.0	39,997	41,346	43,750	22.2	6.9	10.6	
South Cotabato	10,686	11,741	15,431	34.7	26.4	30.7	12.2	7.4	6.6	78,688	66,792	82,129	15.0	8.2	8.1	
Sultan Kudarat	10,544	10,870	13,036	48.8	41.5	40.7	10.3	14.5	10.4	57,817	52,064	53,776	13.7	17.4	9.2	
Cotabato City*	12,670	13,805	17,335	26.4	41.2	38.0	17.3	13.5	24.5	8,049	14,132	13,414	17.5	20.1	32.9	
CAR	13,071	14,033	16,810	30.8	25.8	28.8	5.2	6.6	5.7	84,717	72,084	87,050	5.7	7.2	5.6	
Abra	13,426	14,654	17,900	47.6	41.0	50.1	6.2	13.0	8.0	18,798	17,339	22,484	13.1	14.9	10.0	
Apayao	11,368	12,256	17,837	26.5	16.8	57.5	15.9	30.3	16.6	4,543	3,313	12,128	14.5	29.4	14.6	
Benguet	14,014	14,447	17,483	13.9	11.0	8.2	15.5	19.9	16.3	17,620	13,472	10,990	15.5	22.2	17.6	
Ifugao	11,809	13,148	15,556	55.7	28.1	30.9	8.0	21.9	19.0	18,140	9,069	11,082	8.5	21.2	18.5	
Kalinga	11,652	13,284	15,031	39.3	46.1	45.8	15.0	11.7	7.8	12,140	15,151	16,113	15.2	8.8	9.4	
Mt. Province	15,122	14,855	16,785	48.4	46.7	45.0	13.3	13.0	16.4	13,476	13,740	14,254	13.3	15.5	16.1	
ARMMh	12,199	12,733	15,533	53.8	45.4	55.3	4.2	5.4	5.0	255,879	228,970	295,220	5.7	6.1	5.8	
Basilan*h	9,509	10,987	13,255	31.5	33.5	31.7	13.1	5.8	30.7	19,110	17,958	17,477	12.8	26.3	32.4	
Lanao del Sur	13,892	13,702	16,567	54.7	37.6	52.5	8.3	13.9	12.6	66,146	48,351	70,544	11.2	13.9	15.2	
Maguindanao	11,906	12,322	15,556	59.3	60.4	62.0	7.0	7.0	6.1	86,539	93,501	107,074	10.4	9.7	7.6	
Sulu	11,672	13,473	15,651	58.9	45.1	46.5	9.8	11.3	10.7	58,522	48,195	50,701	12.0	11.4	12.0	
Tawi-tawi	12,003	11,707	14,765	52.4	34.6	78.9	10.2	20.0	9.0	25,562	20,964	49,423	12.8	17.2	13.8	
Caraga	10,903	11,996	15,249	43.8	47.1	45.5	4.9	4.2	3.8	179,226	195,622	201,929	5.6	4.8	4.6	
Agusan del Norte	10,933	11,460	13,986	40.9	33.2	35.2	7.0	7.9	8.5	42,992	36,198	40,668	7.4	7.3	7.7	
Agusan del Sur	11,017	12,150	14,544	52.3	52.8	48.7	10.4	8.8	6.0	59,948	59,815	58,161	10.3	12.0	9.5	
Surigao Del Norte	11,160	12,998	16,961	42.6	54.5	53.2	11.0	8.1	6.8	38,936	52,417	55,510	16.7	8.3	7.7	
Surigao Del Sur	10,421	11,227	15,264	38.4	48.6	45.4	8.7	7.2	8.9	37,350	47,192	47,591	9.2	7.4	11.3	

- a - No CVs were computed since only one sample household was classified as poor in 2003 and none in 2006.
- b - 2000 estimates do not include Isabela City.
- c - 2000 estimates still include Zamboanga Sibugay
- d - No separate estimate yet; still included in Zamboanga del Sur.
- e - No separate estimate yet; still included in Basilan
- f - 2000 estimates include Compostela Valley
- g - No separate estimate yet; still included in Davao del Norte
- h - 2000 estimates include Isabela City

Notes:

1. Zamboanga Sibugay (Region IX) and Compostela Valley (Region XI) are new provinces created under EO 36 and EO 103.
2. Isabela City (Region IX) and Cotabato City (Region XII) have been separated from their respective mother provinces - Basilan and Maguindanao (both ARMM) under the present regional configuration.

* Coefficient of Variation (CV) of 2006 poverty incidence is greater than 20%

On the other hand, the country's state of human development (satisfaction of basic needs) improved in 2000 as exemplified by the increase of human development index (HDI) of 0.656 in 2000 from 0.629 in 1997. All component indices grew in 2000 but the most remarkable progress was noted in income index.

Table 1.3: Philippine HDI, LEI, EI and II, 1994, 1997 and 2000

Index	2000	1997	1994	Difference	
				2000-1997	1997-1994
HDI	0.656	0.629	0.627	0.027	0.002
LEI	0.732	0.717	0.707	0.015	0.010
EI	0.840	0.835	0.812	0.005	0.023
II	0.394	0.336	0.361	0.058	(0.025)

Note:

LEI - Life Expectancy Index

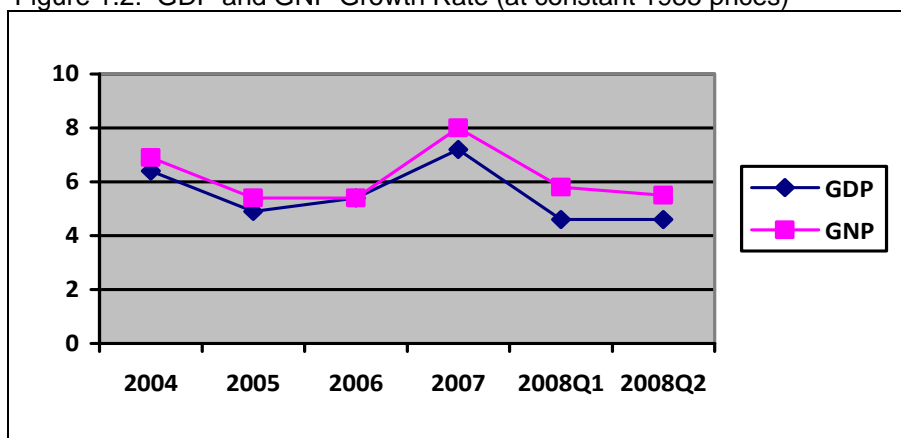
EI - Education Index

II - Income Index

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

In the last 5 years, the economy of the Philippines behaves closely with election years. It jumps up during election years and mellows down afterward. Notice that the gross domestic product (GDP) (at constant 1985 prices) registered a growth rate of 6.4% in 2004, an election year. Expectedly, it went down to 4.9% in 2005 and crawled up a bit to 5.4% in 2006. It jumped up again to 7.2% in 2007, another election year. As expected, it nose dived in 2008 to 4.6% in first quarter and 4.57% in second quarter. It is projected to shoot up again in 2010 where national elections will be held. This is shown in Figure 1.2. Refer to Table 1.4 for details.

Figure 1.2: GDP and GNP Growth Rate (at constant 1985 prices)



Aside from the observed pattern of GDP growth rate, the national accounts show that all the major industries contributed to the growth of GDP in 2007. For instance, agriculture, fishery and forestry (AFF) sector registered a moderate expansion from 3.7 percent in 2006 to 4.9 percent in 2007. Industry sector rose faster at 7.1 percent in 2007 from 4.8 percent in 2006, while services grew at a healthy 8.1 percent in 2007 from 6.5 percent in the previous year. Robust performances were recorded in the mining and quarrying, construction, and finance subsectors.

Table 1.4: Gross Domestic Product, Net Factor Income from Abroad and Gross National Product, 1st Qtr 2003 – 2nd Qtr 2008 (in Million Phil. Pesos)

Period	At Current Prices			At Constant 1985 Prices		
	GDP	NFIA	GNP	GDP	NFIA	GNP
2003	4,316,402	315,077	4,631,479	1,085,072	86,359	1,171,431
Q1	994,224	68,550	1,062,773	253,672	19,168	272,840
Q2	1,032,440	80,778	1,113,218	264,189	22,243	286,432
Q3	1,057,502	83,314	1,140,816	264,671	22,665	287,337
Q4	1,232,236	82,435	1,314,672	302,539	22,283	324,822
2004	4,871,555	376,509	5,248,064	1,154,295	98,036	1,252,331
Q1	1,109,078	84,329	1,193,407	271,817	22,828	294,644
Q2	1,170,574	97,245	1,267,820	282,939	25,580	308,518
Q3	1,198,554	97,202	1,295,756	279,581	24,853	304,443
Q4	1,393,348	97,733	1,491,081	319,959	24,776	344,735
2005	5,444,038	447,145	5,891,183	1,211,452	108,548	1,320,000
Q1	1,234,383	100,221	1,336,605	284,063	25,239	309,303
Q2	1,316,400	112,436	1,428,836	297,426	27,429	324,855
Q3	1,334,509	107,281	1,441,790	292,665	25,680	318,345
Q4	1,558,746	127,206	1,685,953	337,298	30,199	367,497
2006	6,032,835	500,940	6,533,775	1,276,873	115,132	1,392,005
Q1	1,386,629	112,729	1,499,358	299,918	26,490	326,408
Q2	1,456,285	129,652	1,585,937	313,646	29,825	343,471

Period	At Current Prices			At Constant 1985 Prices		
	GDP	NFIA	GNP	GDP	NFIA	GNP
Q3	1,476,341	113,828	1,590,169	307,610	26,008	333,618
Q4	1,713,579	144,731	1,858,310	355,699	32,809	388,507
2007	6,648,245	601,078	7,249,323	1,368,641	134,173	1,502,814
Q1	1,524,077	129,497	1,653,574	320,816	29,495	350,312
Q2	1,618,601	166,415	1,785,015	339,651	37,366	377,017
Q3	1,613,788	154,246	1,768,034	329,543	34,311	363,855
Q4	1,891,779	150,921	2,042,700	378,630	32,999	411,630
2008						
Q1	1,667,968	160,236	1,828,204	335,752	34,890	370,642
Q2	1,834,230	206,492	2,040,722	355,204	42,624	397,828

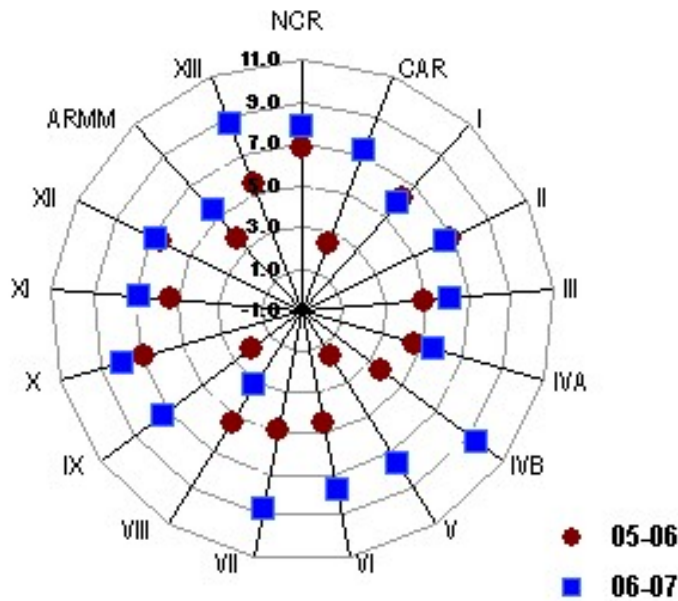
NFIA - Net Factor Income from Abroad (including interest payments on public debt in its outflow).

All figures are estimates as of Aug 2008.
 Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB)

At regional level, 14 out of 17 regions posted significant growth in their regional gross domestic product (RGDP) in 2007. The top 5 are Region 4B, Region 7, Region 13, Region 10 and NCR. This is depicted in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: Comparative Growth Rates of Regional Economies: 2005-2007, at constant prices (1985=100)



On geographic grouping category, NCR remains the top contributor to the national economy accounting for around one-third of GDP closely followed by Luzon which also accounts for almost 1/3 of GDP. Visayas and Mindanao account for 16.5% and 17.7%, respectively. Refer to the following figures.

Figure 1.4

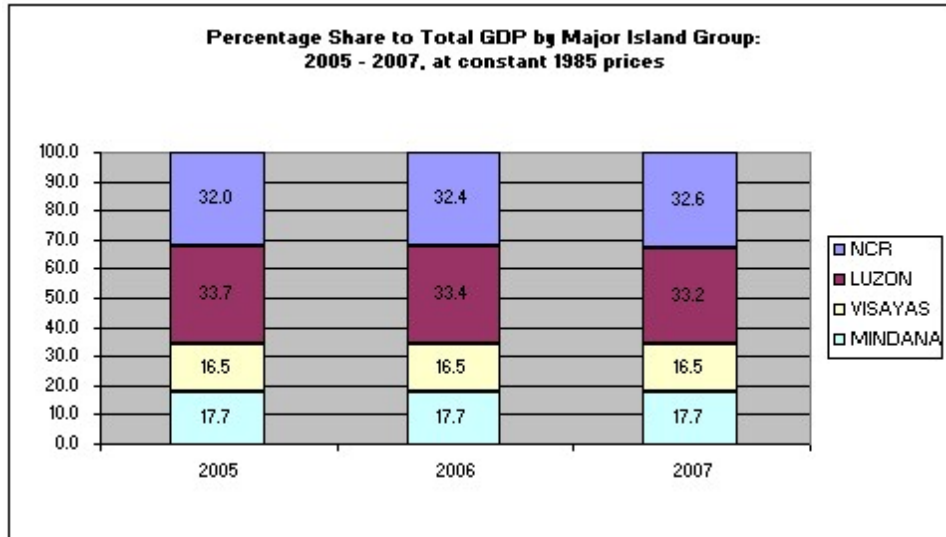


Figure 1.5

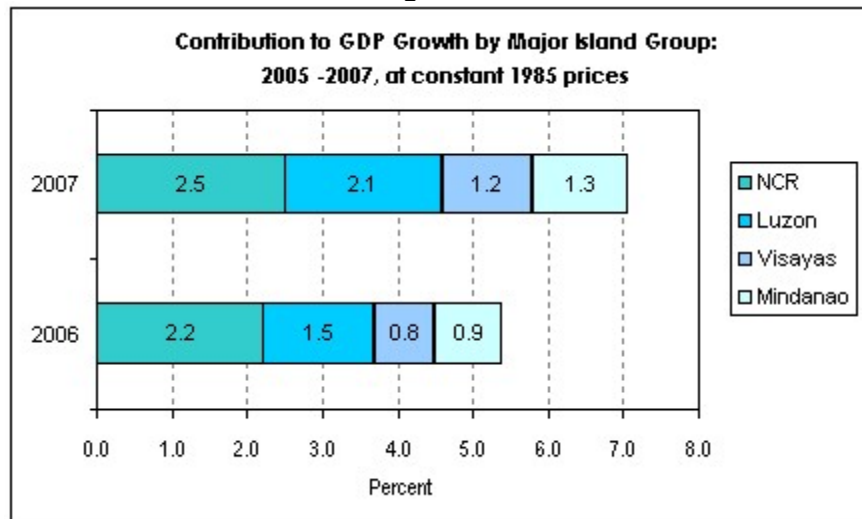
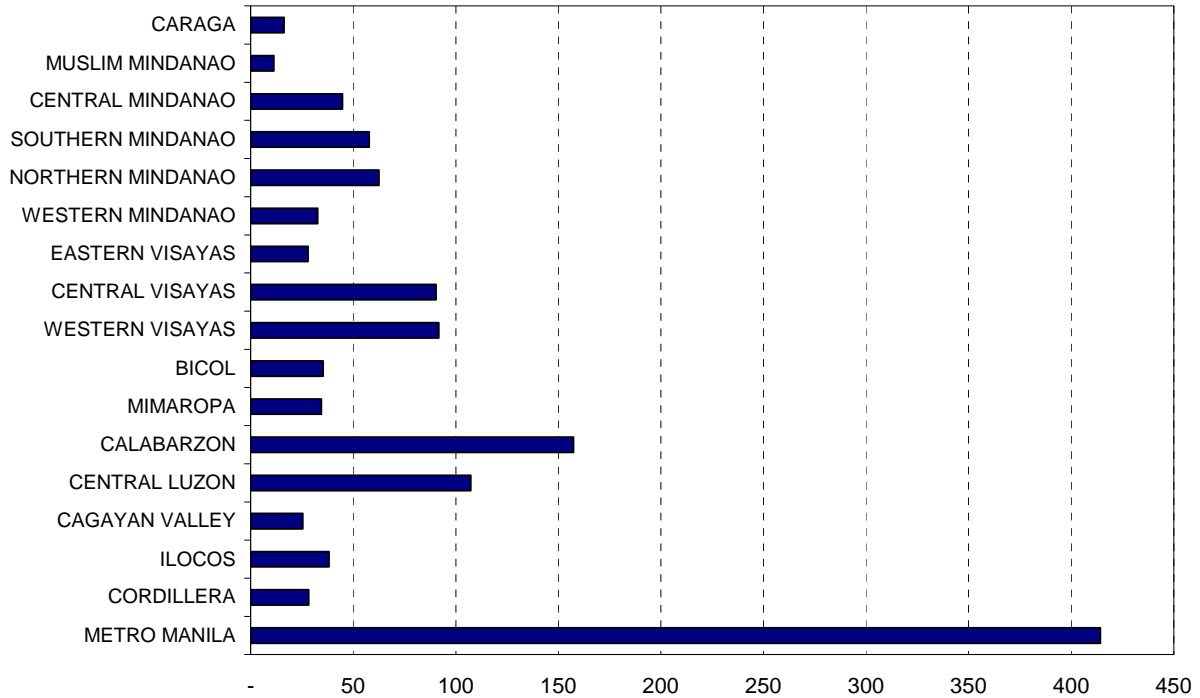


Figure 1.6

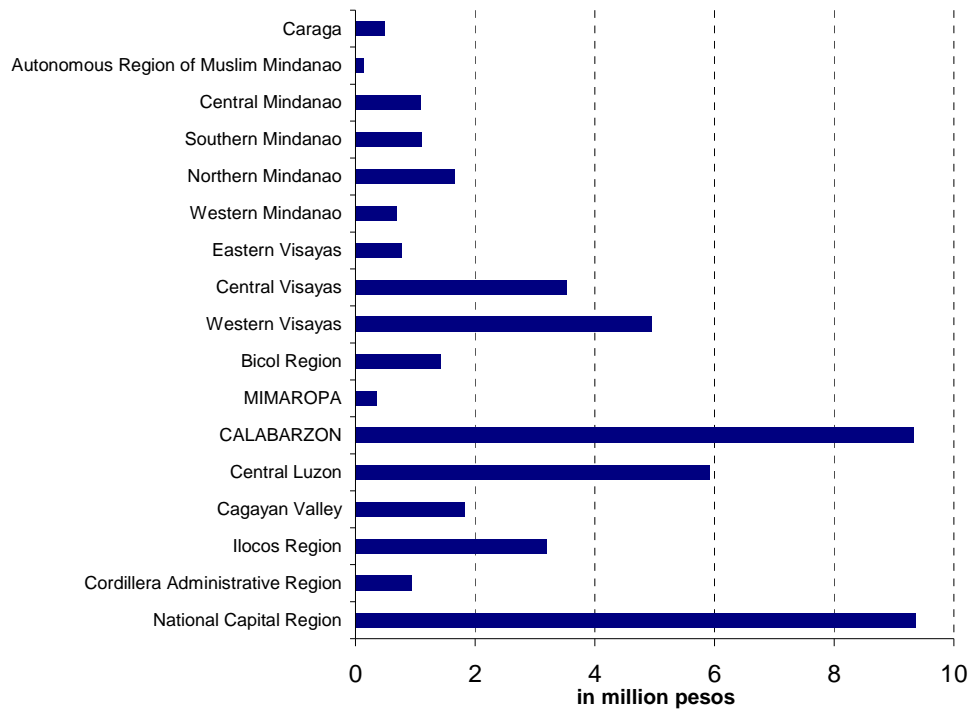
Gross Regional Domestic Product (2006)
in trillion pesos, At Constant 1985 Prices



As can be seen from Table 1.4, the Philippines is benefiting from dollar remittances of its more or less 1.06 million (as of 2004) overseas Filipino workers (OFW). Cash remittances of OFW were estimated at P50.4 billion per year based on NSO survey in 2005. In fact, it is one of the saving graces of Philippine economy in times of economic crisis. Regions that are benefiting most from OFW cash remittances are NCR, Region 4A (Calabarzon), Region 3 (Central Luzon) and Region 6 (Western Visayas). This is depicted in figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7

Cash Remittances by Region, 2003



The national government is projecting an annual OFW remittances inflow of \$16-17 billion in both 2008 and 2009. This is despite the current global economic crisis, which resulted in job losses for a number of OFWs. Confidence in the resilient inflow of remittances is due to the surge of demand for more highly-skilled workers abroad that have bigger salaries. In the coming years, the performance of a lot of the country's industries will still be dictated by the health of these remittances. This is particularly true for the real estate, retail, and manufacturing sectors.

1.2 Political Situation

The Philippines is under a democratic form of government – as established by the 1987 Constitution - patterned from the USA. A president heads it. He is both the head of state and the head of government for a term of six years. As a multi-party system, the government has three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branch. The executive branch is the law-enforcing body and is headed by the President. The legislative branch is the law-making body, whereby its power is with the Senate and the House of Representatives. The judicial branch is the law-interpreting body and its power is with the courts, the highest of which is the Supreme Court. All these branches are independently monitored by the Ombudsman, which has the power to prosecute any official alleged of graft and corruption.

Furthermore, the country has local government units (LGUs) for provinces, which are divided into smaller units: cities, municipalities, and barangays. A governor heads a province; a mayor heads a city or a municipality; while a barangay captain heads a barangay. Every locally elected official is entitled to serve a term of three years.

For every aspect of the country's well-being, the government has agencies that are headed by Cabinet officials. Among these are the Department of Health (DoH), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for the people's well-being; the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for infrastructure; the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) for the promotion of research and technological advancements; the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for enhancing business and job creation; etc.

Among other institutions in the country, the Roman Catholic Church is a strong political driving force. This has been shown in the People Power Revolutions of 1986 and 1998 in which the Marcos regime and the Estrada administration, respectively were overthrown. The former has been particularly important as it restored the means to balance the State's power - the Philippine Bill of Rights gives protections against government power. It includes the due process and equal protection clause, the right against unwarranted searches and seizures, the right to free speech, the free exercise of religion, the right against self-incrimination, and the right to habeas corpus.

SECTION 2

DISABILITY RIGHTS PROTECTIONS AND MECHANISMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

2.1 International Commitments

The Philippines has acceded and acquiesced to various international conventions and commitments including the Biwako Millennium Framework and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Biwako Millennium Framework was adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific during the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Conclude the Asian and the Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993 – 2002) that was held in Otsu City, Shiga, Japan. The Commission adopted Resolution 58/4, espousing the promotion of an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for people with disabilities in the Asian and the Pacific region in the 21st century. In addition, it endorses the extension of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993 – 2002) for another decade.

The Philippines is also a signatory to the United Nation Millennium Development Goals (UN MDG). The UN MDG is a set of eight goals, which ranges from reducing poverty to controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS, and providing universal primary education, targeted to be accomplished by 2015. The MDGs form a blueprint agreed upon by all countries and leading development institutions which have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest population. The Philippines also sanctions the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is an agreement among countries aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities have the same rights and freedom as any other person.

A significant progress in the promotion of rights of people with disabilities was achieved by the United Nations' declaration of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, with the theme "Full Participation and Equality" in all development efforts in the disability field. This was seen as the recognition from the highest political level of the rights to equal participation of persons with disability.

The declaration of the UN Decade of Disabled Persons from 1983 to 1992 led to the formulation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. This Programme sought to promote effective measures for the prevention of the causes of disability as well as the rehabilitation of persons with disability. Moreover, it advocated the promotion of full participation and equality of human rights. The Asia Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons from 1993 to 2002 was instituted in 1993 which provides the mandate and basis to sustain, strengthen, and expand the efforts initiated during the UN Decade.

The UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was adopted in 1993. The following year, the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 159, Recommendation 168 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and UNESCO Salamanca and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education were passed.

2.2 National Framework

In the past, persons with disabilities were often invisible and viewed as “objects” of protection and assistance rather than subjects of rights. As a result of this position, persons with disabilities were excluded from mainstream society, and provided with special schools, sheltered workshops, and separate housing and transportation based on the assumption that they were incapable of coping with either society at large or most if not all of major life activities. They were denied equal access to basic rights and fundamental freedoms, such as health care, employment, education, vote, participation in cultural activities, that most people take for granted.

A dramatic shift in perspective regarding people with disabilities, however, has been taking place in the country over the past two decades. Persons with disabilities are starting to be viewed as holders of human rights. The rights-based approach to disability is gradually being adopted by the Government. Though the process is slow and uneven, it is taking place in all economic and social systems. The rights-based approach to disability essentially means viewing persons with disabilities as subjects of law. Its aim is to empower disabled persons, and to ensure their active participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life in a way that is respectful and accommodating of their disabilities. This approach is normatively based on international human rights standards and is operationally directed to enhancing the promotion and protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities.

There is no Constitutional definition of disability in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. However, a statutory definition under the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act No. 7277) exists, which defines disability at Section 4 as follows:

(1) A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more psychological, physiological or anatomical function of an individual or activities of such individual; (2) a record of such impairment or (3) being regarded as having such impairment.

The definition is wide enough to include persons who may not traditionally be regarded as disabled. In fact, the Magna Carta further defines disabled persons as those “suffering from restrictions or possessing different abilities, as a result of a mental, physical or sensory impairment, that hinder them from performing an activity in a manner that is within the range considered normal for a human being”. Moreover, although the Philippine Constitution has no special provisions for people with disabilities, it makes provisions guaranteeing social justice and human rights and liberties to all its citizens (Article XIII). These are rights that apply to all its citizens and as such, persons with disabilities are expected to enjoy these rights equally with the rest of the society.

2.3 Philippine Legislation & Agenda for Persons with Disabilities

Several national efforts were undertaken by the Philippine Government to usher in a major change in the philosophical, social, and developmental thinking in the approach to helping people with disabilities. These efforts were further reinforced with the passage in 1992 of Republic Act No. 7277, also known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, which marked a turning point in the policy and program development for persons with disability. Considered landmark legislation, the Magna Carta provides for the rehabilitation, the development and provision of opportunities

towards self-reliance, and the integration into the mainstream of society for persons with disabilities.

The Magna Carta has paved the way for the implementation of the philosophy of inclusion since it provides persons with disabilities full participation to, and the equalization of opportunities in seven major areas of concern: employment, education, health services, auxiliary social services, telecommunication, accessibility in transportation and communication, and recognition of their political rights. Some of the salient features of the Magna Carta include:

- *On employment:* the law guarantees that persons with disability shall have the same access to opportunities for suitable employment as their able-bodied counterparts.
- *On education:* the law ensures that disabled persons are given the opportunity and proper motivation to improve their lives through education. It is also mandated that Special Education shall be established in public schools in cities or municipalities. Where viable, Braille Libraries shall also be established.
- *On health:* the main thrust of the Government would be towards the prevention of disability (be it occurring before, during or after pregnancy), the detection and early diagnosis of disability, and the early rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.
- *On barrier-free environment:* programs are being developed to ensure that persons with disabilities can freely move in a disabled-friendly environment. The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) takes the lead in implementing the provisions of the law regarding access to public transport facilities. The Department of Public Work and Highways (DPWH), on the other hand, takes charge of the accessibility of public and private buildings and establishment to persons with disabilities.
- *Implementation of the law:* Department of Justice (DOJ) is mandated to ensure that those who violate the law shall be penalized.

The Philippines' policy towards persons with disabilities is expressed in national legislation and in guidelines adopted by the Government. Both the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and the Philippine Constitution Article XIII stress the importance of rehabilitation, self-development, self-reliance, and integration into mainstream society of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are identified as among the under-privileged citizens in country's legislation. The Magna Carta calls for the prioritization of the needs of persons with disabilities through the adoption of an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, and the provision of social services at affordable cost.

A significant contribution to the national movement concerning persons with disabilities is achieved through the passage of Proclamation No. 240, signed by President Arroyo in 2002 declaring the years from 2003 to 2012 as the Philippine Decade of Persons with Disabilities as an offshoot of the recently concluded Asia-Pacific Decade. The Proclamation states that, "the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons is hereby directed to rationalize all disability related efforts by formulating and issuing a Comprehensive National Plan of Action for the Decade which translates the objectives of R.A. 7277, B.P. 344, and other disability-related laws and policies into concrete programs of action for the Decade. All heads of Departments, Chief of Bureaus, Offices, Agencies and Instrumentalities of the National government, including officials of Local Government, are hereby instructed to implement plans, programs, and activities geared towards the development of persons with disabilities based on the National Plan of Action for the Decade."

In line with the Asia Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and its blueprint the Agenda for Action, the Philippines formulated the Philippine Plan of Action that sets into motion the directions for implementation of programs and services for persons with disabilities. This Plan of Action

ensures full participation of, and equalization of, opportunities for persons with disabilities. It seeks to institutionalize the prevention of the causes of disability and the rehabilitation of people with disabilities within the targeted decade from 1993-2002. The plan embodies strategies and programs of action that are intended towards the prevention of the causes of disability, the provision of effective and efficient rehabilitation services, and the integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society through equalization of opportunities.

Prior to the observance of the Asian and Pacific Decade, the Philippines had three major laws that created the legal bases for measures to achieve the objectives of full participation and equality for persons with disabilities:

- Accessibility Law (Republic Act 344), “An Act to enhance the Mobility of Disabled Persons by Requiring Certain Buildings, Institutions, Establishments and Public Utilities to Install Access Facilities and other Devices” (approved in 25 February 1983);
- White Cane Act (Republic Act 6759), “An Act Declaring the first of August of Each Year as White Cane Safety Day in the Philippines and for Other Purposes (enacted in 18 September 1989); and
- Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act 7277), “An Act Providing for the Rehabilitation and Self Reliance of Disabled Persons and their Integration into the Mainstream of Society and for Other Purposes” (approved in 24 March 1992).

These national laws embody the rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities. They include provisions that remove conditions, such as discrimination, that adversely affects the development of persons with disability.

Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Accessibility Law were amended in March, 1995 to provide stiffer penalties to violators. Amendments to the Magna Carta and the White Cane Act have been proposed to the Philippine Congress, in an effort to make them more responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Special legislation on the Party-list System for Congressional (House of Representatives) representation was passed in 1995, which provides for the inclusion of political parties of persons with disabilities to vie for representation in the Lower House of Congress.

Several issuances to reinforce the implementation of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and Accessibility Law were also passed, including:

- Executive Order No. 385, “Creating a Task Force to Address Gaps/Concerns of Persons with Disabilities with Fund Allocation”;
- Executive Order No. 261, “Creating an Inter-Agency Committee for the Promotion, Employment of Persons with Disabilities”, with the Department of Labor and Employment as lead agency; and
- Administrative Order No. 101, Instructing the Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Education, and the Commission on Higher Education to Ensure Accessibility of Public Buildings; e.g. schools, colleges, universities; and for the Department of Budget and Management to release funds for the purpose (issued by former President Joseph Estrada).

The National Directorate of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines has adopted Resolution No. 0110-2001 for the establishment of the Office of Persons with Disabilities Affairs (OPDA) in all municipalities nationwide. OPDA will serve as the structural organization for the implementation of programs/projects to minimize or cushion adverse impacts of poverty on persons with disabilities.

2.4 Government Bodies

According to NCDA, “based on historical accounts the government’s concern for the disabled persons began as early as 1917 and the national concern for rehabilitation was manifested by non-government organizations as well.”

The Philippines hosted the Second International Conference on Legislation Concerning the Disabled from January 16-20, 1978. This conference was organized by the Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (PFRD), which is a national affiliate of the Rehabilitation International. During the conference, then President Ferdinand Marcos signed Presidential Decree No. 1509, thereby creating the National Commission Concerning Disabled Persons (NCCDP). The NCCDP was tasked to prepare and adopt an integrated and comprehensive long-term National Rehabilitation Plan (NRP).

From the time of its inception in 1978, the Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Disabled, Inc. (PFRD) served as the NCCDP’s Secretariat to assist the NCCDP Board in the implementation of its objectives and functions. This mandate stayed in effect until P.D. 1509 was amended by P.D. 1761 in January 4, 1981. For the different government agencies to be able to effectively perform its role in implementing this law, the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP) was created. As such, the NCWDP is the lead agency tasked to steer the course of program development for persons with disabilities and the delivery of services to the sector. It is tasked to monitor and coordinate the efforts made by different agencies in the implementation of the Magna Carta.

The NCWDP is also the central authority mandated to direct, coordinate and integrate planning, management and implementation of all activities pertaining to disability prevention, rehabilitation of, and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. Subsequently, the NCWDP passed a board resolution creating the Regional Committee for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (RCWDP) in all regions. The RCWDP serves as an advisory body in the region that will provide direction in the formulation and implementation of programs and services for persons with disabilities as well as resolution of issues and concerns of the disability sector. Moreover, RCWDP is tasked to recommend policies and programs for persons with disabilities to the NCWDP for appropriate action.

From the success of the programs initiated during the [International Year of Disabled Persons](#), the Decade of Disabled Persons (1981-1991) was proclaimed for nationwide observance on December 17, 1981, with NCCDP as the lead agency. To further espouse and strengthen the observance of, as well as the implementation of, the thrusts of the Decade, Proclamation No. 125 was issued by then President Fidel V. Ramos on January 15, 1993. This Proclamation enjoins both the government and the private entities to organize projects based on the policy categories mentioned in the Agenda for Action of the Decade.

President Gloria Arroyo, through the Office of the President, created policies to further strengthen the Government’s programs related to the welfare of persons with disabilities. President Arroyo affected the reorganization of NCWDP through Executive Order No. 676, signed on 199 , thereby detaching it as an attached agency of DSDW. The said Executive Order is devised in order to closely monitor and improve the Government actions and programs for persons with disabilities. By virtue of Presidential Executive Order No. 709, issued on February 26, 2008 the functions and organizational structure of NCWDP is further redefined, and it is renamed as the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA).

At present, the Philippines' National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) is the national government agency mandated to formulate policies and to coordinate the activities of all agencies, both public and private, concerning disability issues and concerns. NCDA is mandated to monitor the implementation of several laws to ensure the protection of [Persons With Disabilities](#) civil and political rights. It has also been tasked, through [Proclamation No. 125](#), to coordinate activities, and to monitor the observance of the [Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons \(1993-2002\)](#) in the Philippines.

NCDA is tasked to strengthen the database on disability for policy formulation and program development, conducts policy review and consultation dialogues with different stakeholders, right holders and duty bearers in preparation for the participation on the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

2.5 Public Awareness

The country's annual nationwide observance of the National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week (NDPR Week), held from July 17 to July 23, is the Philippines' major vehicle in raising public awareness on disability issues and concerns. The annual NDPR is a means to raise awareness about the rights, needs, potentials, and contribution to development of persons with disabilities.

Advocacy coupled with information, education and communication (IEC) campaign strategies and tools are employed to generate awareness and to effect behavioral/attitudinal modifications on the public perception of disability and persons with disabilities. These information tools include:

- Radio/TV plugs
- Photo exhibits/information caravans
- Painting/photography, and other forms of talent competitions
- Puppet shows
- Disability-related publications; e.g. magazines, directory of rehabilitation services and resources, annual reports, booklets/leaflets on services for persons with disability, posters, brochures
- Press conferences, press releases, news features
- Trade fairs and bazaars for products of persons with disabilities
- Employment fairs to increase awareness on the availability of "employable" persons with disabilities
- Conferences, symposia, lecture series, local assemblies, and giving of awards to recognize efforts of private individuals and organizations supporting of persons with disabilities.

The Philippine Postal Corporation issued Commemorative Stamps on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons in 1998. Athletes with disabilities are included in the annual Philippine National Games Sports competition. This led to the organization of a national sports association for persons with disabilities called PHILSPADA (Philippines Sports Association for the Differently-Abled). Filipino athletes with disabilities have won honors for the country in international sports competitions, such as the Fespics and Paralympic games.

Job fairs and employment "talk-shops" were held in different parts of the country to promote the "employability" of persons with disabilities. Annual trade fairs showcasing products made by persons with disability have been conducted in the country's shopping malls. Advertising agencies have likewise included disability dimensions in their program concepts for commercial

advertisements. The country also participates regularly in International Abilitylympics, which is the Olympics of Trade Skills of Persons with Disabilities. The country delegation is composed of winners of the National Skills Competition conducted by the Philippines' Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, in which persons with disability are welcome to compete.

A Philippine Dictionary of Signs was developed in 1999, including a VHS tape complement, to standardize sign language for Filipinos with hearing impairments. Funding for this project was provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The manual was circulated in schools and to organizations of those with hearing-impairments as well as other interested parties. In addition, two national television programs in the country are provided with sign language interpretation.

2.6 Accessibility and Communications

In recognizing the overall importance of accessibility in providing equal opportunities and full participation to persons with disabilities, a special monitoring team has been organized, with the Department of Public Works and Highways as the lead agency. The monitoring team is created primarily to monitor buildings and establishments for public use in order to ensure compliance with the Accessibility Law. The monitoring team includes one or more persons with disabilities who use the access features of facilities. Their inclusion in the monitoring team is for the purpose of determining whether such access features comply with the specific requirements stipulated in the Accessibility Law. The DPWH has funds allocated in its budget to meet the accessibility requirements of public infrastructures.

To promote accessibility in transportation, seminars are conducted by concerned agencies of government as well as organizations of persons with disabilities to orient "jeepney" and bus drivers and other transport operators on the requirements of the Accessibility Law. In large establishments, parking spaces are designated for the exclusive use of persons with disabilities. To further increase their mobility, this law was implemented in 1992, thereby enabling persons with disabilities who meet the criteria of the policies and guidelines set by the Land Transportation Office (LTO) to apply for a driver's license. In addition, A Manual on Assisting Disabled and Elderly Persons Who Travel (ADEPT) in Land, Sea and Air Transportation was developed in 1995 and disseminated to the concerned sectors. ADEPT training has been conducted for personnel and crew of sea, land and air transportation firms since 1995.

Accessibility has been included in the curricula of architecture and engineering programs and in the Philippine National Building Code of 1993 through the efforts of the United Architects of the Philippines.

2.7 Education

The Department of Education (DepEd) promotes inclusive education that mainstreams students with disabilities in regular classes. DepEd has issued several policies related to people with disabilities, including the following:

- Department Order No. 14, Series of 1993, "Creation of Special Education Council";
- Department Order No. 12, Series of 1999, "Production of Textbooks for Learners with Visual Impairments"; and
- Department Order No. 11, Series of 2000, "Recognizes Special Education Centers in the Philippines".

The Department of Education also conducts training of teachers on special needs education. Among the instructional materials developed include:

- Community-based resource materials for “the visually-impaired”, “mentally-challenged” and “hearing-impaired”;
- Basic learning competencies for students with visual impairments for Elementary and Secondary levels;
- Integrated Program Package on children with autism focusing on education, early detection, and intervention; and
- Resource materials for the “Community-Based Special Education Program for the Blind and Deaf Who are Out of School”.

Limited provision for funding assistance to deserving students with disabilities is given through the Private Education Financial Assistance (PESFA) program. Parent-Teacher fora are conducted to address concerns of children with special needs. Moreover, parents of disabled children are trained to advocate issues on behalf of their children.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has initiated the TAWAG program, a continuing Education without Barriers program, to enhance the physical, social, mental, and psychological abilities of children and out-of-school youth with disabilities through their integration into day-care services or special and regular schools. Resources for the Blind (RBI), a non-government organization, and the government-owned Philippine Printing House for the Blind (PPHB) provide Braille services. PPHB also translates into Braille academic books for use in the elementary and secondary schools.

2.8 Training and Employment

National training and employment programs were developed and implemented in support of the training and eventual employment of persons with disabilities, including the following:

- *Tulong Alalay sa Taong Maykapansanan* (Support Services to Persons with Disabilities) was started in 1994, with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as the lead agency. This program has the following components: skills mapping, skills training, wage employment, and self-employment;
- Assistance Package for Persons with Disabilities was started in 2000 by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It provides the following services to persons with disabilities: skills and livelihood training, product upgrade, development and marketing, trade fair participation, development of entrepreneurial capability, and business management skills;
- Philippine National Skills Competition for Persons with Disabilities, which is a program started in 2001 by the Technical, Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). As of the second quarter of 2002, TESDA has provided training, including training on livelihood, entrepreneurship, values formation, leadership and advocacy, to 1,301 persons with disabilities. It has also granted scholarships to 914 persons with disabilities in technical vocational courses through the Private Education Student Financial Assistance (PESFA) program; and
- Science and Technology Intervention for the Poor, the Vulnerable and Persons with Disabilities, which is a program developed by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). This program provides funding for equipment/facilities, working capital, and other incidental expenses of projects for people with disabilities and their organizations.

Training programs have been organized and conducted for persons with disabilities by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the areas of: reflexology, waste recycling, bonsai growing, cut-flower and orchid growing, shell craft, weaving and mat making, cattle fattening and goat raising, slippers, stuffed-toys and candle making, meat processing and baking, compost soil preparation and landscape gardening, and doormat/potholders and paper-mache making. Persons with disabilities who were successful in their training were provided soft loans to start their own business.

The DSWD continues to provide training and employment to the sector through the strategically-located National Vocational Rehabilitation Centers and the Rehabilitation Sheltered Workshops that are located in various parts of the country. These centers are currently being upgraded to make them more tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities.

On the other hand, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has Republic Act No. 8759, also known as the Public Employment Service Offices (PESO), which was signed on 2000 to provide employment assistance, especially to persons with disabilities, at the municipal and city levels.

2.9 Prevention of the Causes of Disability

The Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with the private sector and other government agencies, conducts advocacy campaigns in the area of prevention of the causes of disabilities. Prevention measures undertaken by DOH include: immunization and vaccination, screening of newborn babies, free distribution of vitamin A capsules as a way to prevent blindness, iron tablet supplementation, production and distribution of iodized salt, mother and child care program, pre-natal and post natal care, and nutrition education. In addition, several non-governmental organizations and civic groups operate medical missions or mobile clinics to provide early intervention to communicable diseases and illnesses.

The DENR has implemented an action program in support of measures to prevent causes of disabilities through: prevention of accidents as a major cause of disability, information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns on ill-effects of pollution and environmental degradation, and the provision of first aid/safety procedures for emergency treatment. DOLE, on the other hand, through the Occupational Safety and Health Center, conducts safety regulation programs for the prevention of accidents in workplaces in order to prevent occupation-related disabilities.

At the local level, Local Government Units (LGUs) through the Social Welfare and Development Offices, undertake the following programs towards the prevention of the causes of disabilities: nutrition programs and classes on proper food preparation and handling, classes on responsible parenthood, supplemental feeding programs, classes for caregivers, identification/screening/referral to proper service providers of patients identified with cataract, training of community health workers, parents, and paramedic professionals on preventive pediatrics, and genetic counseling. Health Centers under the operational supervision of LGUs extend medical services for early intervention or treatment of diseases. These Centers also conduct training and education programs on health, proper nutrition, hygiene, and other aspects of medical care. Community health workers, families, counselors and other allied health professionals also undergo training on preventive pediatrics and genetic counseling for early identification, management and prevention of congenital impairments in children. Training of medical, paramedical and related personnel is conducted by both government and non-government organizations as well as by professional associations.

2.10 Rehabilitation

The community-based rehabilitation (CBR) approach is used to provide services to persons with disabilities as a response to the limited number of hospitals equipped with rehabilitation facilities and units. The NCWDP developed the Philippine Handbook on Community-Based Rehabilitation in 1993, which was field tested in 1994 and disseminated to relevant agencies/organizations in 1995. As of 2000, some 44 regional and provincial hospitals in the country have rehabilitation units that provide services to persons with disabilities. The DOH, recognizing its limited resources to reach out to persons with disability in the rural areas, uses the CBR approach in its delivery of health services. The agency's 2001 statistics indicate that 896 local supervisors, who are household members and advocates, and 448 intermediate supervisors were trained by DOH on basic rehabilitation techniques, covering 112 municipalities and cities nationwide. CBR has also been integrated in allied medical degree courses in selected universities, including the state-owned University of the Philippines. A number of NGOs, including organizations providing services to persons with disabilities, are using the CBR approach to deliver services through the trained community volunteers/workers.

KAMPI, a national federation of 241 organizations of persons with disabilities in the Philippines, operates and maintains 60 community-based centers, called Stimulation and Therapeutic Activity Centers (STAC), for children with disabilities aged 0-14 years old. As of 2008, these Centers have provided rehabilitation and pre-school training to more than 7,000 disabled children - making KAMPI one of the largest providers of rehabilitation services for children with disabilities in the country. The facilities are owned and operated by persons with disabilities, with the help of about a hundred professional staff. Funding for this initiative is provided by the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) through Danish Society of Polio and Accident Victims, which is a Danish organization of persons with disabilities.

2.11 Assistive Devices

Provision of assistive devices and equipment is recognized by the Philippine Government as an important measure to achieve the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of National Defense (DND), the NCWDP and the Local Government Units have augmentation funds to provide subsidy, albeit limited, for the purchase of assistive devices for persons with disabilities who cannot afford the cost of such devices. These devices include wheelchairs, crutches, braces, canes, artificial limbs, corrective eyeglasses and hearing aids, among others. As funds for these are limited, only a number of beneficiaries are assisted each year, usually on a first-come-first-served basis.

Research on the use of indigenous materials in the production of assistive devices has been conducted. However, instructional manuals on these have yet to be developed. Training of community-based workers in appropriate paper-based technology for constructing assistive devices and technical aids were conducted at various CBR sites in the country. NCWDP has developed a Catalogue of Assistive Devices in 1996 which has been distributed to relevant government organizations and non-government organizations. NCWDP reports indicate that there are 16 government and 10 non-government facilities in the Philippines that produce assistive devices and provide training on the use of these devices.

SECTION 3

DISABILITY MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippine Government through its lead agency, the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), continues to hold dialogue and consultations with local chief executives and other concerned groups at the local level to lobby for support to developmental efforts that will benefit persons with disabilities. It has coordinated with partner agencies in the conduct of significant disability events to generate public awareness and support. It has also lobbied with the legislators for passage of the bills and submitted the positions papers. It has conducted advocacy programs and public information projects in various places in the country to ensure continuing consciousness on critical issues and concerns affecting persons with disabilities. Finally, it has directed the expeditious formulation of the guidelines on the:

- Issuance of Identification cards to persons with disabilities for the entitlement of 20% discount on different establishments stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442. The approved guidelines have already been disseminated to all Local Government Units (LGUs) nationwide for implementation;
- Establishment of Regional Councils on Disability Affairs (RCDA) in place of the existing Regional Committees for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (RCWDPs). Upon the request of NCDA, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has reconsidered the chairmanship of the RCDAs through its Regional Directors

The Philippine Government recognizes the significant role of organizations of persons with disability in their development process. For the past decade, the Government has been supporting efforts for the formation and strengthening of self-help groups of persons with disabilities by providing of technical assistance where needed, and resource augmentation towards economic independence of the beneficiaries. Self-help groups have also proven themselves to be effective lobbyists and advocates on issues affecting persons with disabilities. National and local consultations and dialogues are conducted regularly with representatives of the disability persons organizations (DPOs), spearheaded by the NCWDP and the regional committees on disability. This undertaking represents an institutionalized strategy to monitor, update and gather feedback on the needs, issues and concerns of persons with disabilities.

3.1 Disability Organizations

There are a number of disability NGOs providing services to persons with disabilities in the Philippines. In fact, recognizing its limitations in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities, the government continues to reach out to NGOs to enlist their support and assistance in providing services to the disability sector.

In recent years, disability organizations have been actively involved in providing services to their own members, especially in the areas of rehabilitation, education and vocational training and self or open employment. The national federation of cross-disability grassroots organizations of persons with disability, KAMPI, is implementing one of the largest rehabilitation programs for children with disabilities aged 0-14. This organization is a partner of the Department of Education in providing training and orientation on special needs education to 400 "receiving" public school teachers in 5 regions of the Philippines. Other disability-NGOs partners of the Education

Department are providing training to public school teachers including the Resources for the Blind, Inc. and the Christoffel Blinden Mission, a Germany-based NGO.

Several other NGOs are providing services; however these tend to be on a small-scale and with restricted geographic coverage. There is a need to develop a framework for collaboration to prevent duplication of activities among these NGOs and to promote coordination, complementarities of efforts and sharing of examples of good practices as well as resources at all levels.

The knowledge and expertise of these disability organizations are also often limited to the needs and requirements of the specific impairment groups whom they serve or represent. Until recently, when local government units have become more aware of providing resources and support for the sustainability of the efforts of NGOs, there has been a limited degree of sustainability after funding (which often is provided by a partner organization or foundation overseas), is exhausted. There is a persistent need to develop the capacities of these organizations to provide effective and sustainable solutions to the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities other than short term stop-gap measures like donations of reconditioned assistive devices, etc.

UNESCO and UNICEF are among the agencies of the United Nations that have been providing both funding and technical support to the Department of Education to encourage initiatives on special needs education in the Philippines. Despite these initiatives, however, the education system is far from being able to realize the goal of including the widest possible number of learners with special needs as problems like low enrollment, disparity between boys and girls with disabilities, and high dropout and repetition rate among students with disabilities remain pressing issues.

SECTION 4 MONITORING THE INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERIENCES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

To monitor the human rights experiences of people with disabilities in the Philippines individual, face-to-face interviews were conducted by qualified monitors, themselves persons with disabilities, in the four major regions of the country. The fieldwork took place during the period October 30 – November 15, 2008. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed with the software NVivo 8 on the basis of a coding scheme supplied by DRPI. This scheme provides for an examination of individual life stories of persons with disabilities in terms of access to the five general human rights principles specified in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability as well as in other international human rights instruments: 1) Dignity; 2) Autonomy; 3) Participation, Inclusion and Accessibility; 4) Non-Discrimination and Equality; and 5) Respect for Difference.

4.1 Composition of the Sample

One hundred persons with different disabilities were interviewed for this study. This sample was distributed equally among the four major geographic areas of the country: Luzon, Mindanao, Visayas and the National Capital Region.

More than half (54%) of the persons interviewed for this project had a mobility impairment. Persons who are blind or have low vision made up the second largest group in the sample with 27% of the respondents, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing followed making up 9%, and persons with intellectual disabilities with 2%. Persons with other impairments (including speech impairment, amputated/missing arm, etc) accounted for 8% of the interviewees. (see Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1). Refer to Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1.

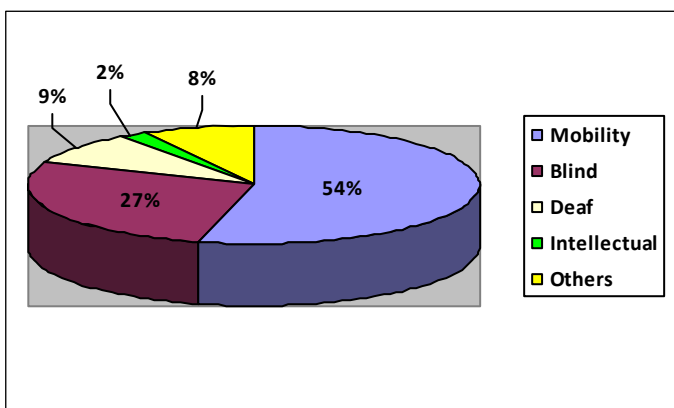


Figure 4.1

Distribution of Respondents by Disability

Geographically speaking, the sample was spread out throughout the Philippines. For instance in Luzon, it covered three regions while in the Visayas it covered two regions. Five out of the six regions of Mindanao were represented in the survey. Refer to Table 4.2.

Respondents are predominantly male (68%), at least 18 years old (mean age is 40.28 years), educated (only 10% without schooling), with job (64%), and almost evenly split between rural and urban areas. A good number of them belong to lower income class DE (43%) and middle income class C (43%). Those belonging to upper income class AB account for 7%, which is consistent with the socio-economic composition of the population. The income class of another 7% could not be determined due to incomplete information. (see Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5).

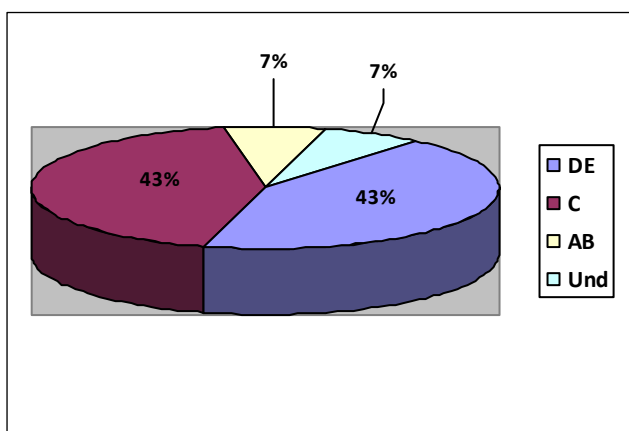


Figure 4.2

Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Economic Class

Other information collected on the socioeconomic background of respondents is presented in Table 4.17. In summary none of the respondents resided on the street or in makeshift shelters. Most of them lived with their families, with spouse (44%), with children (40%, mean number of children is 2.07), have their own house (56%), with concrete house (55%). 46% of them reported living in a place they considered accessible to persons with disabilities.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2.1 Human Rights Experiences

The following discussion of preliminary results from the individual monitoring interviews revolves around the general principles of human rights across eight aspects or domains of the life of the respondents: 1) Privacy and Family Life; 2) Education; 3) Work; 4) Participation in Social Life; 5) Information and Communication 6) Access to Justice; 7) Income Security and Support Services; and 8) Health, Habilitation and Rehabilitation. The timeframe for reporting experiences spanned the last five years.

Privacy and Family Life

Issues related to privacy and family life were discussed by a large number of participants in this study, which denotes the importance of this domain for the well-being, dignity and rights of persons with disabilities. In most cases respondents have reported that their **sense of dignity** has been lifted more than it has been eroded in the context of family life. This is evidenced by a 48% incidence rate of experiences of positive dignity compared to a 26% incidence rate of

negative experiences of erosion of dignity. This results in a net incidence rating (NIR)² of positive 22%. (see Table 4.6). These findings can be found in statements of people interviewed such as the following:

...My disability doesn't matter with them [my family] because I am able to perform my role as a mother and housewife. I don't have problems with my parents, my husband and with my children. Same with my in-laws...

...My parents are very proud of me. They always brought me to socials, like being with my relatives or family friends. They would introduce me and say this is our son, _____, he is deaf. He knows how to drive and he used to act in movies, etc. They were never embarrassed about me...

...My auntie was the one who help to improve my confidence. They respect me as a normal person despite of my disability. And that was the thing that may improve my confidence"...

...Yes, it's only my mother that I have. With regards to my brothers and sisters, they were respecting my birthright being the eldest. Before they act on any plan they used to consult me first asking me whether their decision was alright or can I still help them on some particular problem. That was our family...

Despite their sense of dignity respondents reported experiencing **limited autonomy** within the family. Indeed, Autonomy has a very low NIR at only 5%. One interviewee for example confided:

...There were many invitations that I have turned down like the ones in Cebu and Davao because my mother would not allow me...

...When I became blind. In our house my mom didn't want me to go out because she was worried about me...

...I was forced to give up my studies to give way to my brother. I really liked to pursue my studies but could not do so. It saddened me.

Yes, I wanted to buy a scooter so bad then. But my Dad said NO! He gestured that I might get into an accident. Then I asked sometime after if it was okay in the future if I saved

² A net incidence rating (NIR) is the overall rate obtained for the country across the four regions. A positive NIR indicates higher positive than negative incidence of a given human right principle, while a negative NIR indicates higher negative than positive incidence. Thus a positive NIR shows that across the four regions positive experiences in terms of realization of a particular human rights principle in a given domain of life outnumbered negative experiences, whereas a negative NIR reflects that denial, violations or abuse of that human right principle were more frequent. Zero NIR means that positive and negative incidence ratings are equal, which shows neutrality.

enough money to buy a car? And my dad said, a car is a lot safer than a motor bike or scooter. Buying a car is fine with us. Then I said, would it be okay for us to travel to the States someday? Because we have relatives there, I think. My parents said that only when I am older, have saved enough money to pay for my own expenses, then they will allow me. Even riding on a boat is okay, it's just the motor bike which they hate, sad thing is, it's the one I like most.

With regard to the rights of participation, inclusion and accessibility, the NIR found is 11%, which suggests that more often than not respondents reported feeling **included in the family life** and able to participate in family affairs in an equal basis with others, as these interviewees reported:

When business improved, my family and I went to places together. They would always have me in tow. We went to Baguio, rode on a plane, traveled around...

The happiest [moment] was when my girlfriend said yes to me until we got married and have a child. We have our own house. That's the happiest experience in my life.

The finding related to the human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality also showed some regional differences, yet the overall incidence rating for the country was positive (NIR of 7%). This result indicates that the majority of the respondents reported experiencing **equality within the family** and felt **non-discriminated** by their family members, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

...Since I was a kid, they were never ashamed of me. They accepted me as I am, a person with disability. If we have visitors, they introduce me to them that I am their son, a member of the family...there's no discrimination in the family...

I'm accepted in the family...how they treat me is the same as how they treat my siblings too...

No they [my family members] don't neglect me, they care for me they also support me ...My family takes care of me.

Similarly, except for one region (Mindanao), a positive NIR was observed in terms of respect for difference throughout the country. In other words, interviewees reported feeling **accepted in their disabilities and differences in the context of family life**. This is expressed in the following excerpts:

...Oh yes, my parents, brothers and sisters understand and love me for who or what I am...

Once I've remembered a friend that he was left by his wife because of his disability. But for me, I'm lucky and blessed to have a wife who looks within the personality.

[The most satisfying thing in my life is] the support of the family and relatives. Despite the disability, they're still people who love me.

Education

Education is fundamental to open up equal opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy their rights and freedoms, to access jobs and live a life with dignity. In the context of education, most respondents expressed having experienced situations where they felt their **dignity recognized**. In fact, the total NIR in dignity was found to be 4%. For example, one respondent reported:

...I was one of the participants in International Skills Competition in New Delhi, India last 2003. I represented the Philippines...

... That time also, there was a parade in Davao and we were part of the procession so they saw us on TV. My classmates told me "Hey we saw you, you're really well-known huh!" my teachers also and the others...sometimes there was a time of taking pictures so...in the local newspapers...my neighbor saw me there...so I could tell to myself that I'm well-known..

All of the people that I socialized in the school were very proud of me because I was one of the most active students in our class.

Nevertheless, **lack of autonomy** in the context of education, rather than a positive sense of self-determination, was often reported by the participants in this study (NIR -1%). One participant told the monitor:

...During my high school days I was forced to wear a fatigue uniform. I became a medical staff in college not of my own choice. During high school I couldn't march, but in my PE, my participation would be the checker of the attendance...

Overall, interviewees reported they were able to **participate** and felt **included** in educational settings (NIR 6%), as illustrated by the following excerpts:

...Instead of picking on me, my classmates were very supportive of me...

...I was given a task wherein I was very happy about, they asked me to join a choir. Yes, to me it was an accomplishment that I joined and still meet the regiments as a choir

member. It was my first accomplishment ever, to be able to sing and be part of a choir. It was true, what my friends told me before that I could do this, I shouldn't give up. Even if some would underestimate my talent, I would still go on. I was very inspired.

When I got my Pre med in UST, I have to struggle to go up to 4th floor, but with the help of my schoolmates, they always gave and offered me a helping hand which I really do appreciate a lot.

Non-discrimination & equality in education however showed a negative score (NIR of -2%), suggesting that the participants in this study more often than not have encountered situations of **discrimination and inequality in educational settings**. This is reflected in the following excerpts from respondents with mobility impairments:

...My entire classmates thought that I was a useless person but at the end they realized that being a disabled person like me does not mean that I can't do what the other non-disabled persons can...

My course was computer programming. It was a 2-year course and I encountered discrimination in school from my classmates and professors. I just did my best to finish my studies because I want to help myself and my family.

..[D]uring exams, I have to wait until they are done because somebody has to write for me. I can write but they were concerned that they wouldn't be able to understand my handwriting...

Respect for difference within the domain of education was found to be -4% NIR in all areas. A common experience for people interviewed in the study has therefore been **disrespect for their difference within educational contexts** as is reflected in these comments:

There was a time that my classmates teased me because of my disability...

My number one barrier was when I was just a kid in elementary school that I was almost always teased by my schoolmates. I was so affected by it ...

When there was recitation in class, I would get nervous because of my speech problem.. I felt embarrassed when my classmates laughed at me.

Work

Access to work provides not only a means of economic subsistence, but also an opportunity to engage in larger social networks and gain recognition as a productive member of society. For many people with disabilities in this study, however, work-related experiences rarely offered any of these rewards. For instance, the sense of **dignity in work-related contexts was not frequently reported** among the participants of the study (NIR of only 2%), reflecting a situation where their worth as workers and contributors to the economy is not very often recognized. The next excerpts illustrate it well:

I applied at the DSWD and worked there from 2003-2004. My work was from Sunday through Thursday. But my earnings of P1000 plus wasn't enough. I went begging probably once a week but didn't have stay on the street all day long.

As much as I don't want to, but I just can't find another job. it's hard to beg. Sometimes I go begging on the highways. I might get hit. But most of the time, I stay in one place. But I don't really like it. If only I have a decent job

But my earnings depend on my location which earns little. Even if I'm paid the minimum, it wouldn't suffice. Because right now, we don't have electricity at home.

Similarly, experiences of **autonomy in the workplace are relatively rare** (NIR of only 2%) for the majority of the respondents. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

...We could not decide for ourselves. It was our handler who was making all decisions regarding our massage services. He even divided our earnings into 60-40%, 60% for him and 40% for us blind masseurs. He even required us to wear shirt with the term BLIND printed on it without consulting us...

In employment side they also won't hire disabled persons because they think that it's a hindrance that's why they also don't allowed me to participate in the programs. Maybe they think I am not able to do what they are doing and where they go, that happens sometimes

I was never able to attain my goal... I have brothers who are already made and successful. The deaf son, me, I'm special, I am still helping, assisting my father in our business. Sometimes, I secretly wish I were a hearing person so that I can start my own business. Because I know I am smart, but as a deaf businessman, it's hard to understand what the hearing say.

In the aspect of participation, inclusion, and accessibility the study shows that **experiences of exclusion outnumbered those of participation and inclusion in work** (NIR of -1%). This is reflected in the words of those interviewed:

...I have many skills, like acting, driving, computer and video editing, and many more. The only obstacle is that there are no jobs available for us deaf people. Other companies wouldn't even bother to give us a glimpse...

...There was a time during my heydays when I was given a chance to act in an action movie. I was very hopeful then that the public would finally open their doors to deaf actors like me, but the reverse happened. My first obstacle then was that no script could be written for a deaf actor like me because it was their first time to cast someone like me. Second, another option they have was to get a hearing actor to play as a deaf character in the future to facilitate easy communication, and that leaves me out of the picture. There goes my dream of becoming an actor...

...Another difficulty I had then was that my co-workers don't know sign language yet so all we did was to use pen and paper or the keyboard and monitor for communication...

Discrimination and inequality in work were found to be very frequent experiences among participants in this study (NIR of -22%). This is clearly reflected in excerpts such as the following:

...It happened in connection with my work. Like in attending meetings, they would say that I couldn't because I was not fit to travel because of my disability. They belittled my capacity. They didn't look at what I could do...

...I was a fresh college graduate then. I experienced discrimination when I applied for a clerical position. They told me I wasn't qualified. The reason given me was my disability...

...Yes, there was a time when I was applying there was people who discriminates my physical appearance, But then I told to them that don't look on my appearance because like an ordinary person I can do what the other can...

Similarly, in the domain of work people with disabilities interviewed for this study found that there was **little respect for their differences** (NIR -5%). Here are some of their typical stories:

...Sometimes my co-workers called me putol (amputee) or pilay (lame). I know it's a joke but still it hurts...

...I got teased at so much... and I got very hurt and sometimes I even became very pissed, because I find nothing wrong with the idea that I am deaf. It's as if we're lowlife form or something. I would like to stand up to them and explain sometimes, but since they are not aware about people with disabilities so they are not totally at fault...

When I was doing on the job training (OJT) here, they always teased me, the hearing people here. They were making gestures that I was dumb. I simply ignored them and continued with the training. Every time they teased me, I am hurt deep inside but I just smile at them. I never get angry or "get pikon" when they start teasing me. There was a time I found it very tiring, smiling I mean, but I wanted them to have a different impression of me, even if I am different and deaf.

Participation in Social Life

Participation in social life refers to individuals' involvement in social and cultural activities in the context of the broader community. Many interviewees in this study reported situations related to this domain, reflecting their struggles to be fully included in society at large.

Dignity in social participation and independent living registered a low NIR of - 10%, which indicates that it is in the area of social participation that people with disabilities more often experience the **erosion of their sense of dignity** and worth.

Here are a few examples:

...Sometimes while going out to the street, when people saw me they threw money at me even though I was not asking. They just don't know that I have something to be proud of and that's my education...

If you walk on the street without hearing anything like that, it feels like you don't have disability. Otherwise, you are reminded of your disability and somehow your self-esteem goes down.

I got a lot of...sometimes other people can't accept...ahhmmm...sometimes they laugh, I can't really explain what...they.... they do.

That time we went out together then suddenly if they saw their other friends, [my friends] would tell me 'just stay there for a while ok?' So you really feel that they say 'well since you're like that it's useless if you go with us'.

[When you get mocked] you feel annoyed. Then you seem to get angry. Sometimes, you feel ashamed. You seem to look down on yourself.

The figures with respect to dignity are different than those for autonomy. Here an overall NIR of 22% was found thus suggesting that despite the erosion of their dignity, persons with disabilities did not fail to assert their **self-determination and rights in the context of social participation**, as shown in the following excerpts:

...I have to assert my rights. It was my choice and my own will. Nobody can tell you that you cannot do that...

My decisions are what I follow... Nobody is stopping me.

... [O]ne of the organizations that I joined is about advocacy. I want to bring problems like tax for the disabled to the proper authorities. Even though sometimes the process to reaching a proper solution is long and hard we can always find a way.... That is also when I learned the philosophy of independent living, back in 2004. After I learned that

philosophy, my way of thinking about people with disabilities and how the government should help these people being a vulnerable sector of the society changed.

There was once a workshop with the department of health regarding the potentials of the disabled. The workshop was to be held in the fourth floor of the building. It troubled me because the DOH is going to hold a workshop for the disabled in a place where the participants are not accessible to. During that day there is also another workshop held in the ground floor. So I took the attention of one of the DOH workers and told him that the participants on the ground floor are the people without disability and they are using a much accessible place. It was not long before their boss became aware of the situation. So eventually we were able to hold our workshop in the ground floor. I find it funny because people will not act unless you complain about it.

Participation, inclusion and accessibility were found to be important to people with disabilities in the Philippines but were not always experienced by the respondents: indeed, and while there were differences by region, the overall NIR was negative (-6%)

The following excerpts illustrate experiences of **exclusion and denial of participation** that have confronted participants in this study:

...When I was buying a ticket from Philippine Airlines, I was refused a ticket because they learned that I was going to travel alone. They wanted me to travel with a companion. So I would have to spend for my guide. But my money was only good for one ticket. So I took another plane instead...

...I even experienced falling from a bus. I was just about to get off when they suddenly drove off fast in spite of the fact that I always say 'Just a moment, a blind is getting off'. The passengers shouted. But the driver and conductor didn't care. It didn't stop anymore. It just sped away...

...We have been waiting for so long to get a ride but we were unable to do so because the passengers were trying to outrun each other. If only we could board the bus, there are seats that are supposed to be reserved for people with disabilities. But still we ended up standing and the non-disabled ended up sitting...

...Ahh yes really they excluded me from joining some activities in the community , because am disabled, it hurts...

...If it were not for this project I wouldn't have any interaction with people like you. I was never informed of any activity by persons with disabilities"...

...Like one time, we were strolling together.. but .they..just ignore ne... they even told me that I should find another companion...

...There are times that disability will get in the way. For example, issues of the heart. If you want to court somebody, the fear of being ridiculed because of your disability will find its way. Like it's an embarrassment to be seen with someone who has a disability. So, that could prevent you for pursuing what you want...

...The television, we hardly understand what is happening or what we are watching because there are no subtitles or what we know as close-captioning...

NIR for non-discrimination in social participation is at high negative double-digits across all regions with a total net rating of -54%, clearly demonstrating that **discrimination is commonly experienced by many persons with disabilities in the Philippines**. The following excerpts offer powerful testimonies:

...They thought I don't have education because of the way I walk. I was about to buy a pair of pants that costs more than a thousand pesos. The sales lady told me that I might not be able to pay for it. In embarrassment, I retorted that even if I have disability I have a sound mind and I have plenty of money. I even showed her my money...

...I was with my brother to renew my license for notary public at the city hall. The lady in the counter was just bypassing my papers. Later on she told me that the executive judge didn't want her to accept my papers. I requested to talk with the executive judge but the lady told me that it was not possible for me to talk with the judge because I am blind. I really cried. I never renewed my license after that...

...There was a time when I call some taxi. He doesn't want me to ride because he thought that if I ride there was a discount because of my blindness...

There was a similar finding for the participants' sense of **disrespect for difference**, which was found to have an overall NIR of -38%. This is exemplified by the following excerpts:

...I had very bad experiences riding a jeep. I fell from it many times. The drivers saw that I have mobility problem but still they drove off immediately even before I totally got off. So now I always sat beside the driver so he can see me clearly. Problem is it took 1-2 hours to wait for a jeep with vacant seat in front...

...I went to a place by a tricycle all by myself. But I still have to walk after that. Since the place was new to me and I am blind, I didn't know that I was heading to an open drainage. Nobody warned me but I heard laughter while I was gasping in the stinking water. One good soul helped me out of the drainage...

...In McDonalds once, I fell in line and wrote my order on paper and that I am deaf. But the cashier kept on talking and talking to me. In disgust, I called for the Manager and told him in writing that something is wrong with your crew here. I said she knows I'm deaf but she keeps on talking. The Manager reprimanded her in front of me and that silenced her. I understand, many are not aware of the deaf culture and it's very frustrating...

...But they don't call me, they are facing to other person. For instance when I used to massage in the other house, they will say, get the blind, like that. ...I was always teased then as mute; that I was dumb.

...Also there was one incident when I went to Shangrila and lined up to buy a fruit shake. Upon reaching the counter, I typed my order in my cell phone and showed it to the cashier and told him I was deaf. Then he snickered and began mouthing stuff I didn't understand even when I told him already that I can't hear. I was trying my best to endure him but other customers saw him yet still he went on. This pissed me off and cussed at him also mouthing the one Filipino cuss word I know and walked out not buying my order. I figured he should learn his lesson and be aware that we have feelings and I was very embarrassed by what he did...

...Whenever I see adults mocking me and stuff, I definitely walked to them and yell them in writing that, " Please do not make fun of us when we are signing, you must have forgotten that we deaf are about as normal as you hearing people are." Don't you agree, that when they speak or write, that is their language and in the same respect, when we deaf sign, we express ourselves through our language. So what's so funny about that?...

Information & Communication

The way in which people with disabilities are able to get access to information and to communicate in society is important to fully participating and feeling included.

Participation, inclusion, and accessibility in the area of information and communication has a total NIR of -4%, suggesting that more often than not **people with disabilities face exclusion and accessibility barriers in this important area of life.**

The following excerpts denote the kinds of barriers encountered by the participants in this study:

...I still get jealous why the hearing people can use and speak on the phone. They can enjoy watching TV and movies, as well...

...I don't have a phone I couldn't write to her, it took a long time to reach her and it was difficult because I am blind and so is she...

Those who can see have access to the books. But not the blind because there are no Braille books.

Many of the respondents felt that they were not equal to others and that they were **discriminated against when they tried to communicate or find information.** In fact, Non-discrimination and equality has a total NIR of -3%. Consider the following excerpt:

...In an internet café, as I was being helped by the attendant, she suddenly told me that they were very sorry, having a blind person as a customer was new to them. I told her not to worry since I know how to use a computer. She had so

many excuses that I eventually left the place. I was not allowed to use the internet. I felt discriminated against my right because I was different...

It's difficult to study because there are not materials for the blind. For example, the Braille books. They are not available in school....

Net **respect for difference** in information and communication was -1% on the whole, suggesting that overall people with disabilities felt that their needs were disregarded in the planning and operation of communication and information systems, as this respondent shared:

I graduated as a Nutritionist Dietitian..[but] I did not apply for the job...because I'm highly myopic, I have difficulties in reading in what you call the diet cards which is in red card and black printed words.

Access to Justice

It is often through access to justice that rights are presumed to exist and are promoted and protected. Justice and fairness are essential to democracy and to a rights-based society.

NIR for dignity in access to law and the system of justice was found to be 2% on the whole. This indicates that **in encounters with the system of justice a slight majority of people felt respected and valued in their dignity** as the following excerpts illustrates:

...I initiated for the dismissal of two employees from a hospital. It was one in the morning and they made me search for some change for a peso bill. Why can't they just give the medicine and we will just pay for it later? I talked with the boss, and told them not to underestimate me because of my disability because I can file a case against them in the Ombudsman, since they are government employees. They apologized. I felt vindicated...

...now, we have our privilege discount card like a senior discount card and that's good.

When I was riding a tricycle, I cannot carry my things so I asked someone to carry it for me.He did so but was really very mad ...I did not let that pass and went to their president to inform him of what the tricycle driver did. I asked the president to act upon what that man did to me....With the rights of PWDs, I gained the strength to give action to what the tricycle driver did to me

Net participation, inclusion, and accessibility to the system of justice was found to be 1% across the four regions which again denotes that a **slight majority of respondents reported feeling included and able to participate** in this important area of social life. An interviewee for instance reported:

[N]ow there is a law and so I use the law to get better treatment for rides. They used to just leave us, but now they can't do that. They let persons with disabilities ride.

[Normally] the tricycles wouldn't go within the city hall premises [but] I would say to drive it closer because there's a law that allows a disable to be taken closer inside the city call. They would listen to me. ... We took action that the law should be used with the office of ADAP [and] we were given better treatment.

...Because it's not easy to accept at once if the disability was the result of an accident. I hid from the society. That's why I sued the one who gave me that treatment so they may know that there's a law that is protecting me, us with disability...

In access to justice, as in other areas of life, **experiences of discrimination and inequality** were found to outnumber experiences of equality for the majority of participants in this study (overall NIR of -3%). Consider for instance the following excerpt:

...The guard accused me as a thief which made me think that human rights are not for us. It happened when I was eating near the restaurant. The guard told me that I was lucky to have something to eat and then told me that I was a bad guy, that I was a thief. So I complained in the police station but they said that I can't fight for my rights because I'm only a beggar. It means that I can't experience those human rights...

...I'm still waiting for the resolution of the case of my parent who was killed in 2001. (I am asking the help of anybody who can help me with regard to my parents' case. I'm not satisfied with the results. Maybe because we are deaf. We couldn't ask and tell what we wanted. They are just postponing the case...

...Two years ago I was driving and following the convoy of soldiers in our place. It was mountainous. My cousin told me to overtake the truck of the army soldiers. Because of that the soldiers beat us. I begged them to stop but they kept on beating us and they pointed their guns at me. We filed a complaint at the police station but it was not acted on probably because of my disability. I did not push hard with our complaint for fear of our safety...

Income Security and Support Services

Accessing income security and the support services necessary to address their needs are basic rights of all human beings but they gain particular relevance in the context of disability. In fact for

many people with impairments access to technical devices and/or supports often require out-of-pocket expenses which places increased pressure on their often already reduced income. Since many of them lack access to a secure job, they may face increased vulnerability to situations of absolute poverty.

Data from this study has shown that in the area of income security and support services, persons with disabilities in the Philippines do not find that they are treated in way that they felt **not respected in their dignity** (net NIR -1%). Consider the following excerpts:

...We asked help from Dept. of Social Welfare and Devt. (DSWD) but they even got mad at us...

I was embarrassed to look for help. I didn't seek them out. During Christmas they would imply sometimes that I should take advantage of the season and ask. If there are instances when they would voluntarily give gifts, I would accept. But if I have to ask, I wouldn't dare.

It [the lack of supports] really affected in my daily needs. I need money because I have a son; it affected due to I don't have earning, no one trusted me.... I really feel hurt... They just keep telling me to WAIT, and until when? Too far...

Similarly, participants felt that they **lacked autonomy** in access to income security and support services (net NIR of -1%), as illustrated in the following excerpts:

...Because our rights are worthless for the local government. Even though I have plans they don't acknowledge it.

No one [helped me], they just told me to have a constant follow up, but it seems they don't want to help me, they always say to wait ...They just keep telling me to follow up.

*(You said that you want a guide, do you have a guide now?)
My wife. But my wife can't be with me all the time because we have children...*

NIR for participation in support services was found to be low: -8% for the Philippines, denoting that often **interviewees felt excluded and lacked accessibility to necessary supports**. Consider the following excerpts:

...President Arroyo told us that she will give us livelihood program for disabled when she was still vice-president. She is now the president but still we have not received any help from her...

First of all, we need the financial support because we need to have a livelihood support but until now there's none. We have not received any help from the organization or the government yet up to now.

The government hasn't responded to our call to provide us with steady jobs. We haven't have a direct talk with the government though. We channelled it through organizations of persons with disability.

The study participants reflected their sense of **discrimination and lack of equality** in terms of access to income security and disability-related supports: the net NIR found for the Philippines is -3%. In other words, experiences of discrimination prevailed, as in the following excerpt:

... We made a resolution with regard to our budget that the 1% from the national budget shall be divided to senior citizen and disabled person, so that we can move on but to no avail, nothing happened to that budget. According to other sources, disabled like us had no contribution to the politician, that's why...

It's difficult because I don't have a recorder. It's difficult to study the hand-outs or learning materials because they are not in braille. I need someone to read for me. And if I don't understand it, it has to be re-read for me. But if it's recorded, then I can just have it replayed.

... Now, I need a tape recorder. Otherwise, it's hard for me to study

Who reads for you?

My classmates, my friend or my father. Whoever is available. Otherwise, I couldn't study.

I need additional capital for me to be able to run my vegetable production properly (How do you feel that you haven't received the amount that you need?)

Somehow frustrated because I thought I would received assistance. It's like I went back to being by myself and no one to support me.

Health, Habilitation & Rehabilitation

Health is considered to be one of the fundamental rights of all persons. It affects the well-being, both physical and psychological, of all persons. And both habilitation and rehabilitation have a profound impact on the on-going lives of people with disabilities.

Net ratings for health, habilitation and rehabilitation across all human rights principles indicate that negative experiences in this area were as frequent as positive ones. However, people with disabilities reported **feeling discriminated against and lacking equality in the context of health, habilitation and rehabilitation programs** which is a troubling result of this study (see table 4.6). The following excerpt from a respondent with a mobility impairment illustrates this well:

...In the year 2005 they brought me to a hospital. But we don't have money that's why they brought to the public hospital. But I was not treated there equally most of the time. They were always focused on patients with money. Also, I experienced that my papers were not accepted by the hospital...

The NIRs are summarized in the following Table 4.6B while the average NIR per aspect is plotted in Figure 4.3. According to these results, a positive average NIR (that is, a more frequent occurrence of positive than negative experiences of human rights) took place only in the domains of privacy & family life and education. All the other domains are negative or nil and it appears that the incidence of human rights violations is highest in the domain of independent living and participation. Figure 4.4, on the other hand, shows that except for autonomy, all the general principles of human rights in independent living and participation presented a negative NIR (that is denoted greater incidence of negative than positive experiences) particularly nondiscrimination & equality, respect for difference, and dignity.. The two figures show that human rights violations are more prevalent in the domain of Independent Living & Participation particularly in terms of Discrimination, Disrespect for Difference, erosion of Dignity and denial of Accessibility & Participation. In other words, **discrimination and inequality, exclusion and barriers to participation, disrespect for difference and erosion of human dignity in the context of social participation** were the most frequent and serious human rights violations reported by participants of this study.

Figure 4.3: Average NIR of Gen. Principles of Human Rights per Aspect

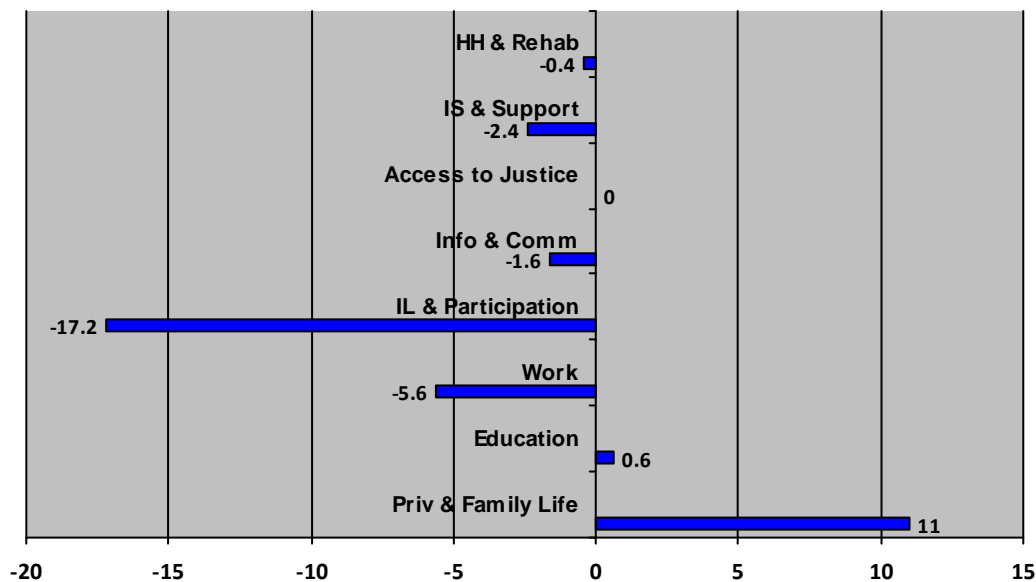


Figure 4.4: Average NIR of Gen. Principles of Human Rights In Independent Living and Participation

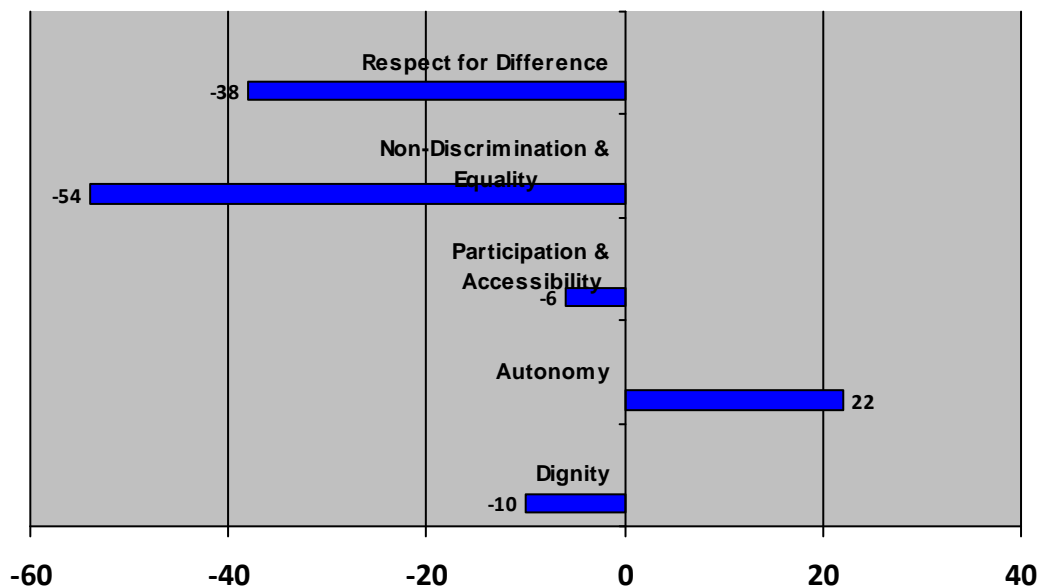


Table 4.6B: Net Incidence Rating of Human Rights Principles

NET HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERIENCES	TOTAL	NCR	LUZON	VISAYAS	MINDANAO
PRIVACY AND FAMILY LIFE:	11.0	26.4	1.6	8.8	7.2
Net Dignity in Privacy and Family Life	22.0	44.0	0.0	24.0	20.0
Net Autonomy in Privacy and Family Life	5.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility in Privacy and Family Life	11.0	16.0	4.0	-4.0	28.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality in Privacy and Family Life	7.0	40.0	-4.0	0.0	-8.0
Net Respect for Difference in Privacy and Family Life	10.0	32.0	8.0	4.0	-4.0
EDUCATION:	0.6	2.4	0.0	-2.4	2.4
Net Dignity in School Life and Education	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.0
Net Autonomy in School Life & Education	-1.0	-8.0	4.0	4.0	-4.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility in School Life & Educ.	6.0	12.0	-4.0	-8.0	24.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality in School Life & Educ.	-2.0	12.0	4.0	-4.0	-20.0
Net Respect for Difference in School Life & Educ.	-4.0	-4.0	-4.0	-4.0	-4.0
WORK:	-5.6	-9.6	-10.4	-3.2	0.8
Net Dignity at Work or in Labor Market	2.0	-4.0	-12.0	4.0	20.0
Net Autonomy at Work or in Labor Market	-2.0	-8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

(cont.) Table 4.6B: Net Incidence
Rating of Human Rights Principles

NET HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERIENCES	TOTAL	NCR	LUZON	VISAYAS	MINDANAO
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility at Work or in Labor Market	-1.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	-8.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality at Work or in Labor Market	-22.0	-28.0	-32.0	-20.0	-8.0
Net Respect for Difference at Work or in Labor Market	-5.0	-8.0	-8.0	-4.0	0.0
INDEPENDENT LIVING AND PARTICIPATION:	-17.2	-20.8	-16.0	-1.6	-30.4
Net Dignity in Social Participation & Ind. Living	-10.0	4.0	-32.0	12.0	-24.0
Net Autonomy in Social Participation & Ind. Living	22.0	-4.0	28.0	32.0	32.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility in Social Participation & Independent Living	-6.0	-8.0	0.0	8.0	-24.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality in Social Participation & Ind. Living	-54.0	-60.0	-56.0	-32.0	-68.0
Net Respect for Difference in Social Participation & Ind. Living	-38.0	-36.0	-20.0	-28.0	-68.0
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION:	-1.6	-4.8	-0.8	0.0	-0.8
Net Dignity in the Workings of Info. & Comm. Sys.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Autonomy in the Workings of Info. & Comm. Sys.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility in the Workings of Info. & Comm. System	-4.0	-16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality in the Workings of Info. & Communication System	-3.0	-4.0	-4.0	0.0	-4.0
Net Respect for Difference in the Workings of Info. & Comm. Sys.	-1.0	-4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
ACCESS TO JUSTICE:	0.0	0.8	0.8	-0.8	-0.8
Net Dignity in Law & System of Justice	2.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
Net Autonomy in Law & System of Justice	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility in Law & System of Justice	1.0	4.0	4.0	-4.0	0.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality in Law & System of Justice	-3.0	-4.0	-4.0	0.0	-4.0
Net Respect for Difference in Law & System of Justice	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
INCOME SECURITY AND SUPPORT SERVICES:	-2.4	-3.2	-0.8	0.0	-5.6
Net Dignity related to Income Sec. & Support Services	-1.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	-8.0
Net Autonomy related to Income Sec. & Support Services	-1.0	0.0	-4.0	0.0	0.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility	-8.0	-12.0	0.0	0.0	-20.0

related to Income Sec. & Support Services					
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality related to Income Sec. & Support Services	-3.0	-4.0	-8.0	0.0	0.0
Net Respect for Difference related to Income Sec. & Support Services	1.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
HEALTH, HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION:	-0.4	0.0	-0.8	0.0	-0.8
Net Dignity related to Health, Habi. & Rehab.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Autonomy related to Health, Habi. & Rehab.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Participation, Inclusion & Accessibility related to Health, Habi. & Rehab.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Non-Discrimination & Equality related to Health, Habi. & Rehab.	-2.0	0.0	-4.0	0.0	-4.0
Net Respect for Difference related to Health, Habi. & Rehab.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

4.2.2 Patterns of Human Rights Violations

This study showed that violations of human rights happened across all socio-economic classes although they are **more prevalent in lower income classes** closely followed by the middle income class (see Table 4.7).

Violations were also found to happen across all types of disability but appear prevalent among blind people and those with mobility impairments. This in part may be explained by the fact that these two types of disability were over represented in the study sample (see Table 4.8).

Across gender, it appears that **female respondents** are more prone to report human rights violations except in independent living and participation, and this despite the fact that female represent less than half of the interviewees (refer to Table 4.9). Across age categories, it appears that the younger persons with disabilities, that is, those from **18 years to 40 years**, are also more likely to report human rights violations. It is possible that this is because they are more active, adventurous and sociable compared to the older ones or perhaps it is because there is more awareness of rights among younger people (see Table 4.10).

Human rights violations were found to occur both in rural as in urban areas, with no significant differences between the two (see Table 4.11).

In terms of work, respondents that are more prone to encounter human rights violations are the **non-professionals** particularly those working as clerks, massage personnel or service workers, and laborer or unskilled workers (see Table 4.12).

4.2.3 Responses to Abuse and Discrimination and Reasons for not Reporting

Despite the broad experience of human rights violations, only a handful (less than 15%) of

respondents claimed to have reported those abuses to authorities. Reasons provided by the respondents for not reporting the abuses they experienced included the following (see Tables 4.13 and 4.14):

- Lack of confidence that something positive would happen to their complaint (32.4% of total reasons cited). For instance one interviewee stated:

...Even if we fight for it, we don't stand a chance...

- Lack of accessibility or lack of knowledge on how and where to report (20.6%). A respondent explained:

I would like to complain but it's hard because I am deaf and speaking is difficult for me...

- Fear of something or avoiding trouble (11.8%) as one interviewee put it:

...I don't want trouble...

- and the Christian/Catholic mentality of leaving it up to God (29.4% of total reasons cited), as in the following excerpt:

...In God's perfect time I'll get hired; I can do nothing about it, If those who are able-bodied have problems, I think it's more so with a person with disability. I leave it to God. I can do nothing about it; My disability is a gift from God. He must have plans for me for giving this disability;(...) Let God judge them in the afterlife...

Refer to Tables 4.13 and 4.14.

4.2.4 Systemic Roots of Discrimination

This study further explored the systemic roots of discrimination from the perspective of the respondents. Results show that misconceptions of people with disabilities, prevailing in the Filipino society, tend to represent them as useless, worthless human beings, unable to do anything, and a burden on others (Refer to Table 4.15). These ideas in turn lead to the discrimination and abuse of people with disabilities, and restrain their opportunities to be educated, access an adequate job, and live a life with dignity, as many recounted:

...Some people, if they saw people with disabilities, thought that they are worthless already...

...I think they see a person with disability as someone who can do lesser things compared to a person without disability...

...My deaf friends were telling me that they were experiencing discrimination.

Most of them are uneducated. Not because their parents could not send them to school, but they thought that they would be hard to teach. So they just let them stay in the house to help in household chores...

...I found it very ridiculous that some people still have that pre-historic notion that deaf people are dumb. We are not dumb, many of us can even write. It's pathetic because they really aren't aware about the deaf, who's to blame? Them, the hearing? I don't think so. I believe it's the government's fault, they have done little to advocate or disseminate information about us...

This is aggravated by lack of awareness on the usefulness, talent, skills, competence and human virtues of persons with disabilities as expressed by one of the respondents:

...I believe it's the government's fault. They have done little to advocate or disseminate information about us...

Many claimed that this situation could have been mitigated by enforcing the implementation of Magna Carta and other relevant laws on people with disabilities:

We have the laws but they are not fully implemented yet. Probably, there should be more hands so it could move forward thereby touching more people with disability and letting them know that there are laws to protect them and to uphold their rights...

SECTION 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Key Findings

This monitoring study found that many people with disabilities in the Philippines continue to experience human rights violations of one form or another. Abuses of their fundamental human rights and freedoms have happened in the family, school, work, community and every domain of life. Human rights violations were found to be particularly frequent in contexts and situations related to participation in social activities and involved overt discrimination and unequal treatment, disrespect for difference, erosion of dignity, denial of accessibility and exclusion.

The subgroups who reported more human rights violations were female belonging to the lower and middle income class and those working as office clerks, massage workers, and unskilled workers or laborers whether in urban or rural areas.

Despite all of these, however, only a handful of victims of human rights violations had reported the abuses faced to the authorities, primarily due to lack of confidence that something positive would happen, lack of knowledge on how and where to report, fear of the consequences and avoidance of trouble, and the fatalistic attitude of most Filipinos to raise up problems and abuse to the Lord.

The discrimination of people with disabilities in the Philippines, according to those who have been victims of these abuses, has roots in the misconceptions and prejudice around disability that prevail in the Filipino society. In fact, popular representations associate persons with disabilities with ideas of invalidity, incompetence and burden, and do not recognize their unique contributions to society.

5.2 Recommendations

While the Filipino state has issued over the years a significant collection of legal and policy instruments in order to protect and promote the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, this study has found a large gap between the prescriptions of existing laws and policies and the reality on the ground. Indeed this research has documented many human rights violations and abuses that are still being experienced by persons with disabilities in all regions of the Philippines. In light of these results, the following measures are considered of **immediate necessity**:

- Implement and enforce the provisions of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, UN CRPD and other pertinent laws on persons with disability with perseverance, willpower and determination, notably through awareness-raising campaigns directed to the general population, institutions (business, educational, health, etc.), local government al units and all government agencies, as well as to persons with disabilities themselves and their organizations. As respondents put it:

There are laws but they are not fully implemented and are not followed. I think there should be more advocacy.

There is already the Magna Carta for persons with disabilities. There is penalty for mocking persons with disability. And there should be awareness campaigns in the community.... The community should be made aware. Because even if there is a law, people are not aware..

There are buildings or structures owned by government which are not disability-friendly which is hard to accept, knowing that they should be examples since they made these laws. They know these laws but they don't implement them

- Provide immediate economic relief to persons with disabilities and their families, particularly those who under current difficult economic times are excluded from the labour market or face increased risk of exclusion:

I just stayed at home... I usually sew. I have nothing else to do... It's just a hobby... If you will think of the effort it takes, it's not really rewarded.

First I need livelihood assistance. For example, I dream of having a clinic where we can do our service so that people who want to have a massage will just go to our clinic.

...[D]uring the recent months I was not able to pay my rent and the business is running low.

...[I]f those who are able-bodied have problems, I think it's more so with a person with disabilities. ... I would just like to have a healthy body and something to earn a living.

- Eliminate barriers to participation in social life (particularly in the public transport system), and tackle disability discrimination in access to education and the labour market so that people with disabilities can live lives with dignity and equality.

Sir, I just hope that people who are normal or physically fit should give attention or assist persons with disabilities. I hope they don't treat us differently from them because we are also human with feelings that could get hurt.

I hope they would allot seats to persons with disabilities in transportations. I also hope they would have an association that would discipline their members about [their treatment of] persons with disabilities, so that they would pay enough attention.

We are asking for respect... Just respect us. If you don't have a disability and I have, respect me. We're both human beings.

Somebody who is a person with a disability should hold office there at the DSWD to communicate with us. Or those able-bodied at the DSWD should experience our disability.

- Adopt a cross-disability focus to address the needs and human rights of all persons with disabilities and not just a few groups; This sentiment is echoed on the following excerpts:

...The government has not done anything significant to let the people know; to let everyone be aware of the deaf, that we exist”...

...One more thing, the government seems to see other kinds of disabilities more than the deaf. We see ramps and elevators all over the city and that’s really great. But how about the deaf, there are a lot of Filipino deaf here...

...Did they bother giving us close captions in televisions or interpreters or even door bells that have built-in light features? Sadly, no...

- In all measures to uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities prioritize the most disadvantaged groups to improve their socio-economic status. These are **women**, the **lower** income groups, **non-professionals and unskilled workers**, and those 18-40 years old.

These specific recommendations reflect the key issues and concerns of organizations of the Filipino Disability Movement, particularly KAMPI, which further advocate for political action in the following domains:

- **Education**

Education is a key factor to ensure improvement in the quality of life of persons with disabilities in general. Government should institute measures to significantly increase the number of children with disabilities included in educational services. Government should further ensure that boys and girls and women and men with disabilities are considered in all plans and programs towards realizing the goal of Education for All. Requirements for teaching aids, assistive devices, and appropriate support to ensure effective educational outcomes for learners with disabilities must be adequately funded.

- **Employment**

Persons with disability are not provided many opportunities for accessing employment. Government must set national targets for the placement and promotion of the employment of persons with disabilities as provided for in the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. These efforts should include strengthening current measures to achieve targets through the mandatory quota scheme and other incentives to employers (aside from tax rebates as currently provided by law), focused awareness raising campaigns targeting at employers and employees, and technical support to employers. The use of job search agencies, establishment of employment placement

and support centers, wage subsidy, job coaching, trial employment and industrial profiling should also be considered as means to ensure full access to employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

There is a direct relationship between living in extreme poverty and quality of life. Every effort has to be made to open opportunities for persons with disability to be productive and to earn incomes to promote their independence. Entry requirements and eligibility criteria to mainstream training programs need to be accessible to persons with disabilities with particular attention given to gender equity and the participation of persons with disability from low-income and poor families. Consideration must also be made to include in training and employment opportunities people with extensive disabilities.

- **Assistive Devices and Support Services**

Government must consider seriously the need to provide assistive devices to persons with disabilities in order to facilitate their inclusion in education, employment and other mainstream activities and entitlements. Continued failure to do so has significantly limited the opportunities of millions of persons with disability to participate equally and fully and live productive lives. Despite some piecemeal efforts, the need for assistive devices remains largely unmet.

Concrete steps must be taken to ensure that all services are made accessible, especially to the most vulnerable among persons with disability specifically those with psycho-social disabilities, users of psychiatric services, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons who are HIV/AIDS-positive and those afflicted with leprosy. Needs of older persons with disabilities have also to be given priority attention in the provision of social services.

- **Accessibility and Communication Systems**

While the Philippines passed an accessibility law more than 20 years ago, most of the provisions of the law are not enforced. The introduction of barrier-free features into existing public transport systems, buildings and other infrastructure must be given priority attention.

Government should initiate immediate action to incorporate access provisions for barrier-free features as a standard requirement in designs and plans for all new construction, renovation and expansion of buildings and facilities, housing projects and recreational facilities, both government or private sector-owned. Authorities should put in place local building codes that incorporate access provisions for persons with disability are properly implemented, and also ensure that sanctions are meted out to violators. The external built environment must be made accessible through the installation of pavements with curb ramps and by providing adequate signage that correspond to the requirements of various disability groups.

Efforts to increase accessibility of the country's mass transport system in Metro Manila, and other areas considering building such facilities, must be ensured, beginning with the main lines and trunk routes, and to see to it that further modifications of and additions to, mass transport systems incorporate barrier-free features at the very outset of the planning stage.

Authorities have an obligation to guarantee the right of access of persons with disability to sign language services in television programs, especially news and documentaries, and in vital public

services and facilities, and to provide an alternative means of communication whenever and wherever this is needed. The right of access to reading materials in Braille, large print, computer diskette, audiocassette and other suitable formats for people who have difficulty reading regular print, has to be similarly guaranteed.

- **Prevention, Habilitation and Rehabilitation**

Strategies for the prevention of the causes of disability must be further emphasized in the implementation of national and local primary health care programs. The free provision of iodine to prevent intellectual disability and vitamin A capsules to prevent blindness especially among children must be intensified especially in the rural areas and urban slum communities.

The community-based rehabilitation concept needs to be applied as a strategy that integrates the issues of disability within a community development framework—with disability seen as a development issue rather than a medical or welfare concern. Filipinos with disabilities must be provided the opportunity to enhance their capacity to assume roles as decision makers, key actors and leaders in efforts for their rehabilitation rather than seen as clients or mere beneficiaries and consumers of services. Greater collaboration of efforts by Government, NGOs and people with disabilities and their organizations must be pursued to promote shared responsibility and accountability among sectors in the development of policies, programs and services.

- **Poverty-Reduction Programs**

Persons with disability have to be included in poverty alleviation programs targeted for the poorest of the poor in general. Programs on poverty reduction must serve to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities—the sector with the most number of uneducated and under-educated, untrained, unemployed and under-employed citizens who are generally poor.

- **National Plan of Action**

A “doable” and responsive National Plan of Action that translates into programs and services the provisions of RA 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Accessibility Law and other disability-related policies and commitments toward the development of the disability sector must be put in place. A well defined policy direction has to be set, backed by corresponding resources to efficiently and effectively deliver services to persons with disabilities. This may require the establishment of specific measures focusing on areas such as barrier-free access to the built environment, access to education, social protection, housing, employment, health and rehabilitation and the mandatory inclusion of disability concerns in provincial, municipal and city plans implemented by local government units. Enforcement measures must also be passed and a mechanism established to monitor the enforcement of those policies listed above, particularly at the level of local government units must be established.

- **Participation in Decision-Making Processes**

Persons with disabilities and their organizations have to actively participate in efforts to identify solutions to issues and challenges that affect their day-to-day lives. Their hands-on knowledge of relevant issues, of which non-disabled people may not necessarily be aware, is important when implementing policies in relation to disability.

Concerned government and NGO representatives must ensure that persons with disability and their organizations are always involved in multi-sectoral collaborations, dialogue and consultations where disability issues are discussed in relation to the national development agenda and priorities.

- **Awareness-Raising**

Lead agencies such as the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons and the regional disability committees, in partnership with media entities at the national and local levels, must spearhead the holding of regular community awareness campaigns, symposia and other activities to correct misconceptions and remove the stigma attached to disability that tend to lower the self-esteem and hinder the full participation of persons with disability in community life and activities.

Service providers, such as those involved in the government's primary health and related programs, are often not aware of disability issues. Efforts must be made to increase awareness by integrating disability issues into mainstream programs like those for poverty alleviation, health, housing, transport, human resources development, labor, education, communications, culture, tourism, political activities and disaster management programs. Particular attention must be taken for the inclusion of specific concerns of women and girls with disabilities to ensure quality of services.

- **National Data on Disability**

Renewed efforts must be made for the collection of comprehensive, accurate and updated data/information on disability, both of quantitative and qualitative kind, and disaggregated according to a vast range of variables including gender. Quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires on large probabilistic samples will ensure a low margin of error and allow for statistical inference on the survey results. Qualitative studies will add depth to this data by providing the personal stories that bring figures to life and allow the examination of the processes of discrimination, inequality and exclusion facing people with disabilities.

Comprehensive, accurate and updated mix-method information is crucial for effective planning and implementation of services and progress monitoring and evaluation, among other important issues. There must be a firm commitment to allocate resources for the establishment of an accurate and credible national data base on disability.