

# LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

## The Philippines



2026



### Key Labour Market Indicators



Population  
117 mio



Workforce  
50 mio



Informal Employment  
< 40%



Trade Union Rights Violations  
5 out of 5

# LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

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## FACT SHEET



Labour Force Participation Rate

**60%**

**35%**

of population covered by at least one social protection benefit

Trade Union Density

**4%**



**1%**

of employees covered by CBAs



Child Labour Rate

**2%**

**25%**

Working-age population (15-24 years)

**16%**

Poverty Rate



**12%**

of youth not in education, employment or training

## PREFACE

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) is the development organisation of the Danish trade union movement. DTDA's work aligns with the International Labour Organization's global Decent Work Agenda (DWA), based on its four pillars: creating decent jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. The overall development objective is to eradicate poverty and support the development of just and democratic societies by promoting the DWA.

The DTDA collaborates with trade union organisations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. The programmes' immediate objective is to assist the partner organisations in becoming change agents in their own national and regional labour market context, capable of achieving tangible improvements in the national DWA conditions and the labour-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The labour market profile brings insights to the labour market model and its trends, status, and challenges. It is prepared in collaboration with national partner organisations, providing annual narrative progress reports as part of programme implementation and monitoring. National statistical institutions and international databanks (e.g., ILOSTAT and NATLEX, World Bank Open Data, and other internationally recognised labour-related global indexes) are also used as sources of data and information.

The profile is regularly updated to reflect the latest developments. Labour Market Profiles for more than 20 countries are available on DTDA's website, ensuring stakeholders have access to the most recent information:

<https://www.dtda.dk/>.

The DTDA supports development programmes in the Philippines in collaboration with the Federation of Free Workers (FFW).



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Philippines' economic growth has supported decent job creation and a shift toward higher-value sectors.** Although it has led to improved employment opportunities for some workers, long-standing issues like informality, underemployment, contractualization, and other non-standard forms of employment continue to limit broad labour-market gains. Low unemployment figures mask job-quality concerns and the effects of large-scale overseas migration. Poverty has declined, but a narrow tax base constrains public investment in labour-market systems. While recent real minimum wage adjustments have been beneficial, balancing these gains with economic competitiveness remains a challenge. Climate-related disruptions increasingly affect vulnerable workers, placing pressure on still-developing just transition measures.

**A strong legal and policy framework shapes labour market outcomes in the country, aiming to enhance job quality, investment attractiveness, and worker protection.** Nevertheless, workers' rights are strictly regulated, and gaps in enforcement continue to weaken their protection. Trade agreements have had limited influence on labour standards, as many lack dedicated labour provisions. National compliance with labour rights has even deteriorated, landing at rock bottom on the Global Rights Index.

**The evolution of social dialogue, supported by tripartite institutions, has contributed to some industrial stability and policy advances.** However, its impact on the labour market remains limited due to low union density, weak collective bargaining coverage and constrained negotiation rights in the public sector. While the multi-tiered dispute

resolution system provides formal and alternative mechanisms, structural inefficiencies, slow preventive mediation, and exclusion of informal workers reduce its effectiveness.

**The workforce faces a decisive period by a growing working-age population, urbanisation, and expansion in services and digital sectors.** The child labour rate is low and falling along with a remarkable drop in the not-in-education, employment, or training (NEET rate), suggesting a positive development of the labour market. Women experience diverse progress in leadership positions. Many workers emigrate, which has become a central part of the economy, but they gain limited professional development. Additionally, a massive segment of internally displaced persons shows weak rights protection.

**Opportunities are rising for those with higher education, while employment for basic-education holders is declining, leading to labour market polarization.** Vocational training has expanded, with growing private-sector participation and nearly gender-balanced access. Relatively low enrolment compared to regional averages, insufficient industry engagement, and declining enterprise-based formal training continue to challenge the TVET sector.

**Although a remarkable upsurge in pension coverage, the minimum allowance remains insufficient to lift beneficiaries out of poverty.** Selecting social assistance programme indigent-beneficiaries is largely political. Overall, the country's social protection system remains underdeveloped compared with neighbouring countries.



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## ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

### Key Findings

- The Philippines shows a solid economic performance -> improving job quality remains a key priority.
- Poverty reduction is in progress -> a combination of economic expansion, growth in wage employment, and targeted social protection programmes.
- The income tax base is relatively limited.
- The most disaster-prone countries in the world -> just transition agenda is challenged.

Economic performance links with labour market conditions, interlinking with employment structures, wages and tax systems.

### Undergoing an Economic Transformation

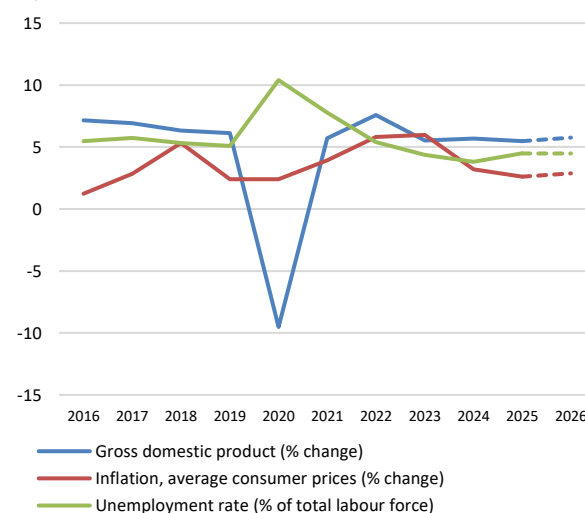
The Philippines' steady economic growth is mainly fuelled by domestic consumption, services sector expansion, remittances, and infrastructure investment (Figure 1 below). These factors are reflected in transitioning from an agriculture-based economy toward a service- and industry-driven economy. It further directly supports job creation, reduce unemployment, and gradually improve the quality of employment in the labour market.

However, these improvements to improving labour market outcomes are mainly among formal, higher-quality jobs, and raising wages in high-value sectors. Challenges like informal work, uneven regional development, and productivity gaps mean the transformation is still in progress, not yet fully complete. Underemployment and skills mismatches remain key challenges that need targeted policies, training, and inclusive growth strategies.

### Impact of Inflation

Although consumer price inflation has been well-controlled in recent years (Figure 1), it still reduces Filipino workers' purchasing power and increases living costs, particularly affecting informal workers. It pressures wages, alters consumption patterns, and can strain household savings, making social protection and wage policies critical for mitigating its effects. The government periodically increases minimum wages to partially offset inflation (see the Working Conditions section). These wage adjustments and social protection help ease the burden.

**Figure 1: Gross domestic product, inflation, and unemployment growth trends in the Philippines, %, 2016-2026**



Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Databases.

### Unemployment Rate is Underestimated

The Philippines' steady unemployment rate has been historic below 5% after the rupture in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic (revisit Figure 1 above). It appears favourable at first glance, but it masks several structural labour market challenges. The relatively low unemployment is veiling job quality, such as contractualization and other non-standard forms of employment, informality and skills mismatch hinder economic upgrading. In addition, massive

overseas labour migration distorts domestic unemployment, linking with limited opportunities at home and trigger potential skill shortages in key sectors. Reintegration programmes for returning migrant workers are hardly successful even as there is absence of transfer of technology.

### **Poverty Reduction in Progress**

The latest official national poverty line was registered at 16% of population in 2023, a fall by eight percentage points since 2015.<sup>1</sup> The trend is supported by a combination of economic expansion, growth in wage employment, targeted social protection programmes, and remittance inflows that have supported household incomes. Although falling poverty has strengthened labour market participation and income stability, the benefits are constrained by persistent informality, skills mismatches, and unequal access to decent work.

### **Challenging Income Tax Base**

The income tax base in the Philippines is relatively limited, with heavy dependence on higher-income earners. While the system is nominally progressive, effective rates and exemptions narrow the base, making revenue more volatile and potentially limiting public investment in labour-market infrastructure. The narrow and uneven income tax base not only constrains government revenue but also indirectly influences labour market outcomes, including formalisation of employment, wages, job security, and skill retention. Broadening and modernising the tax system could strengthen both fiscal stability and labour market conditions.

### **EPZs with Mixture Development**

In the Philippines, Export Processing Zones (EPZs) are a key engine for export-oriented employment, foreign investment, and skills development. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) statistics indicated a rising employment trend in

ecozones; for example, from at least 909,000 in 2012 to almost 1.9 million workers in 2022.<sup>2</sup> This development is further reflected in SEZs' employment share of all employees increased from 4.3% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2022. However, concerns over labour conditions, particularly in manufacturing sectors, encounter low wages, contractualization, and limited unionisation. Other ecozones abruptly shut down without consulting the union and without honouring their commitments under the collective bargaining agreement.<sup>3</sup>

## **Just Transition Agenda**

### **Climate Changes Impacts on Workers**

The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, facing typhoons, floods, landslides, and droughts. Agricultural productivity could decline by 9 to 21% by 2050 due to climate change if no adaptation occurs.<sup>4</sup>

Disasters disrupt businesses and employment, especially in agriculture, fisheries, and informal workers, where most workers lack social protection. Poor working conditions may worsen, reducing productivity and increasing absenteeism. Other indirect effects of climate-induced disasters push internal migration, especially from rural to urban areas, putting pressure with increased competition for jobs, underemployment, and informal work growth. Additionally, reduced productivity due to climate influences can lower wages and income stability, particularly in labour-intensive sectors like agriculture, construction, and fisheries.

### **Platforms to Tackle the Climate Changes**

The tripartite nature of the social dialogue has provided platforms for bringing in the current broad legal and policy framework to tackle the climate challenges, including the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016. This latter act promotes the

creation of “green jobs” and employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment. It is particularly in the agriculture sector where many workers shift out of agriculture, which could negatively affect food security and economic productivity. Nevertheless, the law needs to be updated, as no enterprise appear to have benefitted from it.

### *Just Transition Agenda is Challenged*

The national Just Transition agenda is progressing to promote and develop policy, institutional, and social-dialogue mechanisms. Trade unions are actively involved in these processes, calling for climate finance, capacity support, and technology transfer to support workers in the transition. They additionally direct participation in planning and implementation, with the proposed Tripartite Just Transition Commission. Climate risks are not fully dealing with social protection (e.g., severance, retraining, heat stress and other climate disaster insurance); it is not yet guaranteed. As with many other countries, aligning climate ambitions with just transition in labour-intensive, politically sensitive sectors (like energy) is hard, especially when economic interests resist change.

In October 2024, a group of central organised employers and workers in the Philippines signed a historic pact on transitioning to a low-carbon economy.<sup>5</sup> Local unions similarly have successfully integrated Just Transition provisions into collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), ensuring fair retrenchment policies and training for new job roles.<sup>6</sup> Other trade unions, led by the FFW, have formed the Workers for Just Transition that has served as a platform for worker engagement with government on just transition and climate action. It has developed the 13-point Labour Agenda for Just Transition that it used as an advocacy tool. The emerging fourth industrial revolution (4IR) will furthermore be impacting the labour market,

necessitating a just transition process for affected workers as well (see Box 2 ahead).

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### Key Findings

- Several new law reforms are targeting to improve the labour market.
- Weak enforcement of laws and strictly regulated -> weak labour rights compliance.
- Central FTAs sideline labour provisions.

### *Law Reforms in Progress*

The Philippines’ industrial relations are linked with ten primary laws (see Appendix Table 3). In recent years, the policymakers have enacted several new legislations that are expected to boost private investment and enhance the country’s attractiveness as an investment destination, including:

- **DOLE Dispute Resolution Reform** via Department Order No. 249, Series of 2025, removing geographic constraints and representation procedures are simplified, making it easier for workers to authorize representatives, among others.
- **10-Year Labour Market Plan** (“Trabaho Para sa Bayan” Plan 2025–2034) with focus on upskilling, job quality, and “living wage” could improve job security and reduce underemployment.
- **Service Charge Distribution Reform** makes changes so that non-regular employees (e.g., contractual, probationary, agency-hired) must be included in the distribution of service charges in hotels/restaurants.
- **Foreign Worker Employment Regulation** – Department Order No. 248 (2025): DOLE’s new regulation for employing foreign

nationals, concerning more stringent labour market test.

- **DOLE Online Compliance Portal (OCP)**, launched in February 2025, streamlines registration of establishments and submission of compliance reports — less need for physical visits.
- **Enterprise-Based Education and Training (EBET) Framework Act** of 2024 to help address job-skills mismatch, unemployment, and underemployment.

### **Workers' Rights are Strictly Regulated**

Philippine workers' right to freedom of association is enshrined in the Constitution but strictly regulated. Law prohibits anti-union discrimination but does not provide adequate means of protection against it. The right to collective bargaining is recognised by law, which is similarly for the right to strike but strictly regulated.<sup>7</sup>

### **Central FTAs Sideline Labour Provisions**

The Philippines has signed eight free trade agreements (FTAs): Six FTAs are via the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); two bilateral FTAs are the Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (PJEPA) and the EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. Except for the two bilateral FTAs and the ASEAN-New Zealand FTA, which included a memorandum of agreement on labour cooperation, the other FTAs do not have labour provisions.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, labour provisions are a key part of the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) framework with the Philippines.

Generally, the impact of FTA/GSP labour provisions is uneven; for instance, structural enforcement challenges remain, and the leverage could weaken over time or be constrained by competing political and economic priorities. Considering the level of national compliance with

labour rights (see Figure 2 ahead) further suggests that these features have a meagre impact on improving workers' rights.

### **Weak Enforcement Undermines Rights**

Filipino workers are to a large degree legally protected but in practice their fundamental rights are often undermined by political repression, weak enforcement, and structural labour-market factors (see more in the Workforce section). Although ongoing reform efforts, they are often considered as insufficient relative to the scale of the hurdles. Without more robust enforcement, accountability, and protection, many workers remain vulnerable and disenfranchised in their daily work lives.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, industrial relations still face specific legal barriers and restrictions for workers to practice their rights (see Appendix Table 4).

## **Ratified ILO Conventions**

International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions enumerate international principles and rights at work. Appendix Table 5 shows that nine out of ten Fundamental Conventions and three of four Governance Conventions have been ratified, and 29 of 178 Technical Conventions are up-to-date and actively promoted. The latest ratified conventions are the Labour Inspection Convention (C081) and the Violence and Harassment Convention (C190), both from 2024.

### **CEACR observations and direct requests**

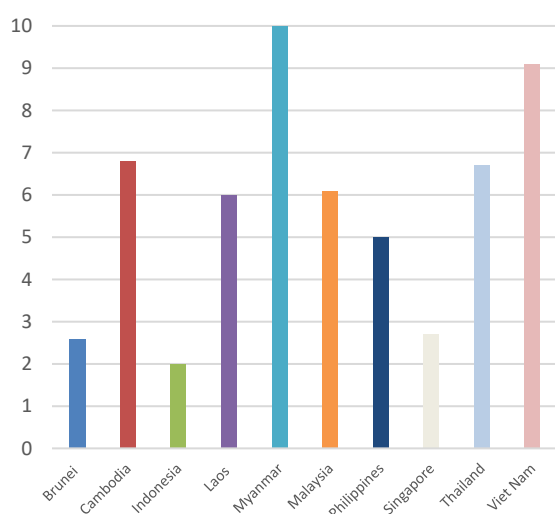
The ILO's independent supervisory system body – the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) – has many observations and direct requests for conventions. For instance, in 2025, the CEACR had observations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C087), dealing with tripartite road map to implement the 2019 Conference Committee

conclusions and achieve full compliance with the Convention; ongoing and new serious violations of basic civil liberties and trade union rights; measures to combat impunity via monitoring mechanisms, training and guidelines on the conduct of stakeholders, and several other pending legislative matters.<sup>10</sup>

### Weak Labour Rights Compliance

The Sustainable Development Goals indicator 8.8.2 measures compliance with fundamental labour rights. Based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, the Philippines' scoring has slowly deteriorated. This trend is happening in other ASEAN countries (see more in Figure 2), not to mention it suggests the country is losing pace with the specific SDG goal.

**Figure 2: Level of national compliance with labour rights among the Philippines and ASEAN countries, 2023**



Note: The value ranges from 0 to 10, with 0 being the best possible score (indicating higher levels of compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining (FACB) rights) and 10 the worst (indicating lower levels of compliance with FACB rights based on ILO textual sources and national legislation).

Sources: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

## SOCIAL PARTNERS

### Key Findings

- DOLE faces significant hurdles in fulfilling its mandate.
- Some progress in united trade union representation.
- Slightly declining trade union density rate due to affiliation is not keeping pace with the evolution of the employment structure.
- Although a single voice of employers' organisations, they encounter complexity of coordinating across sectors and aligning their priorities.

In principle, social partners play a central institutional role in the labour market, which typically refer to the government, trade union, and employers' organisations. Their core function is to represent their interests and to shape labour market governance through structured dialogue, negotiation, and participation in policymaking.

## Government

### Overseeing Employment Relations

The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) is the central authority overseeing employment relations, workplace standards, dispute settlement, and labour policy implementation.<sup>11</sup>

Several other specialised agencies attached to the DOLE cover a range of labour-related regulatory, administrative, or policy functions, including Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Social Security System (SSS), the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Centre (OSHC), among others. A separate ministry, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), handles migrant workers' concerns. Under it are

the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, among others.

### **Institutional and Structural Difficulties**

DOLE faces significant hurdles in fulfilling its mandate, which is echoed in enforcing OSH and general labour standards, persistent skills mismatches, the accelerating impact of automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), widespread underemployment, and regional wage inequalities. These issues are compounded by limited enforcement capacity, the widespread informal work, contractualization and other non-standards forms of employment and frequent disruptions from natural disasters. Therefore, the labour market continues to struggle with job insecurity, uneven access to decent and quality employment, and slow adaptation to emerging industries. These pressures widen inequality and constrain the country’s long-term economic resilience.

## **Trade Unions**

### **Unionism and Labour Relations System**

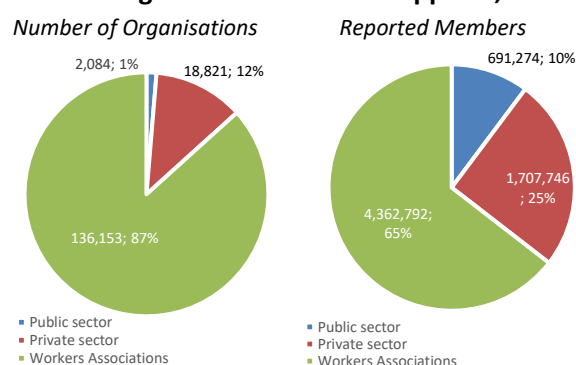
In the Philippines, trade unions are part of the tripartite structure that promotes labour standards in the country. Their role in advocating workers’ rights and ratifying and enforcing international labour conventions has been essential.

Unionism is linked with a “state-centric” labour relations system that focuses on the policies and principles of labour protectionism. This system has been challenged by the modernisation process, particularly in terms of responding to a more globalised, liberalised, technology-driven, and market-oriented economic system.<sup>12</sup>

### **Unionism Divisions**

Organised workers in the Philippines can be divided into i) the public sector, ii) the private sector, including enterprise-based unions, and iii) workers’ associations (informal ‘sector’). Latest data available shows that 157,058 labour organisations are registered, representing with a total membership of almost 6.8 million workers (see Figure 3 and details in Appendix Table 6).

**Figure 3: Registered labour Organisations and Workers' Organisations in the Philippines, 2025**



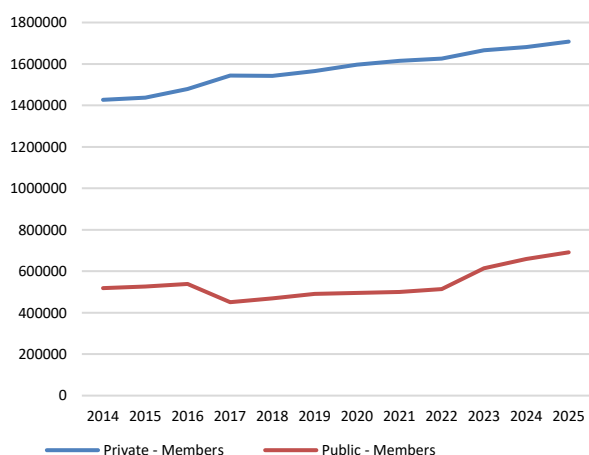
Source: Philippines’ Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview, November 2025.

The two largest trade union federations in terms of the volume of members are the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) with 502,000 members and the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) with 115,000.<sup>13</sup>

### **Evolution of Unionism**

Figure 4 below shows membership of formal trade unions (excluding workers’ associations) rising in both the private and public sectors. It is worth mentioning that the latter group plummeted in 2017, but it rebounded, especially in local government units, attempting to stop the controversial non-standard or end-of-contract (“endo”) model. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 did not drop the trade union membership rate. Instead, more unorganised workers were hit hard by massive layoffs, with thousands in ‘floating status’ in employment and others under the “endo” arrangement.

**Figure 4: Trade union members and unionisation rate in the Philippines, private and public, 2014-2025**



Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Statistical Reports.

The slight increase in trade union membership rates is not fully keeping pace with the growing employee group, signalling a slightly declining trade union density rate. This density landed at 3.8% of total employment or 7.6% of formal workers (employees) in 2025, which was at least half of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average at about 16%.<sup>14</sup>

### Trade Unions Become More Coordinated

The latest conglomeration of trade unions, born out of a united trade union representation to the ILO High-Level Tripartite Mission in January 2023, is the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU) composed of the NAGKAISA (“united”) labour coalition counting 49 trade unions, which the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) chairs (see Appendix Table 11). The NAGKAISA operates with a loose organisational structure. It involves themes including minimum wage taxation and institutionalising core labour standards in the agro-industrial plan. Other formations exist, but data are scarce. For example, NAGKAISA made the statement in October 2025, following the issuance of Executive Order No. 97, a landmark policy ensuring that workers in the private sector

can freely form and join unions, and exercise their rights without fear.<sup>15</sup>

In November 2022, 45 trade unions, workers’ organisations, labour federations, workers’ associations, labour research centres and civil society organisations developed and signed a 15-point Labour Agenda with five priority areas: i) end all forms of contractualization and non-standard employment by pushing for a security of tenure law, ii) strengthen wage policies, especially for the low wage sector, iii) create and preserve decent jobs, iv) fully realise freedom of association, and v) implement universal and adequate social security and (contributory and non-contributory) social protection for all.<sup>16</sup>

Other initiatives are organisations of APTU formed the National Wage Coalition (NWC) in 2024. The Workers for Just Transition followed. The newly launched 10-year national labour market plan (2025–34) is a potential opportunity for the union agenda to gain traction, but aligning the government’s economic priorities with the union demands will require sustained advocacy.

### Trade Unions Face Challenges

The trade union movement in the Philippines has been fragmented, mostly due to differences in leaders’ personalities and ideological thinking. Trade unions struggle with low membership, precarious employment, legal and political risks, the culture of impunity that tolerates killing of trade unionists, red-tagging, fragmentation, and challenges posed by globalization and informal work. While programmes like the 15-Point Labour Agenda show ambition and unity, structural and systemic obstacles continue to constrain the unions’ effectiveness.

### No Guarantee of Rights

The Philippines is among the ten worst countries for workers, ranked 5 out of 5+ (5+ is the worst) on

the Global Rights Index in 2025, which has haunted the country in recent years. This stance represents “no guarantee of rights”: While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices. In the Philippines, workers and unions exist in a daily struggle to exercise even the most basic rights in a venomous environment of endemic harassment, violence, and death.<sup>17</sup>

## Employers’ Organisations

### *Employers’ Organisations Structure and Role*

Employers’ organisations in the Philippines are well established. The Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is recognised as the central body representing a broad swathe of employers, which is integrated into tripartite social dialogue, giving them a formal role in labour policymaking.<sup>18</sup> The confederation is a member of the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

The ECOP’s members are primarily individual corporations and other business membership organisations. The organisation delivers services in training, education, and development programmes.<sup>19</sup> The Technical Working Group (TWG) on labour and social policy issues is a forum to discuss pending labour policy and bills that will ensure the incorporation of various industry groups and foreign chambers’ views.

### *ECOP’s Focus Areas*

In 2025, the ECOP has centred its work on navigating the country’s major “triple transition” challenges—green, digital, and social. Its priorities include advancing sustainability and ESG standards, supporting the national Green Jobs and Just Transition agenda, and addressing the labour-market impacts of AI and automation. ECOP has

also revived a large-scale job creation programme with a new focus on integrating informal-sector workers, while strengthening employers’ capacity through digital tools and training. Public advocacy has intensified, including efforts to enhance employers’ visibility and institutional recognition within national policy dialogue.

### *Employers’ Organisations Challenges*

The relatively low share of employment “represented” by employers’ organisations suggests many employers are not members, especially among smaller firms or informal enterprises. As a proxy indicator, the employers’ share of the total employment is relatively low compared with the Eastern Asia & Pacific average, 2.6% vs. 3.6%, respectively.<sup>20</sup> Some labour policy reforms (e.g., regulation of contracting and subcontracting) have sparked tension with employers’ organisations. While there is momentum to improve freedom of association, actual implementation across all workplaces could be uneven, as well as building capacity and sustaining dialogue remain challenges. Even though there are many sectoral employer associations, coordinating across sectors and aligning their priorities can be complex, especially when national-level social dialogue involves broad employers’ interests.

## SOCIAL DIALOGUE

### **Key Findings**

- An extensive system of tripartite mechanisms -> benefitting more stability in industrial relations and industrial peace.
- Collective bargaining is strictly regulated -> low coverage of CBAs.
- Ongoing restrictions on freedom of association -> undermining the resolution system.

### Social Dialogue landscape

The Philippines has numerous and well-established tripartite institutions (Box 1) and a comprehensive legal framework for social dialogue, including ratified central ILO conventions involving social dialogue (revisit Appendix Table 5).<sup>21</sup> The legal framework additionally promotes bipartite relations, including to promote occupational safety and health (OSH) compliance at the enterprise level.

#### Box 1: Central Tripartite Social Dialogue Mechanisms

The Philippines hosts an extensive system of national, regional, and local tripartite mechanisms. Key national-level institutions include:

- National Tripartite Industrial Peace Councils (NTIPC) and its Standing Committees and geographic counterparts.
- NTIPC Monitoring Body of Freedom of Association (FOA) violations cases.
- Industry-specific tripartite councils such as Banking, Automotive Assembly, Clothing & Textile, Sugar, Construction, Education, and others
- Commissions or Boards of DOLE and DMW attached agencies

These mechanisms span regional, provincial, city, and municipal levels, ensuring broad territorial coverage (see more details in Appendix Table 7).

During recent years, some positive trends are noted, such as initial steps ahead for coordination among trade unions, particularly through national coalitions like NAGKAISA and APTU, later, the NWC; improved stability in industrial relations with relatively calm industrial peace; some policy-level advances, like Adoption of the Tripartite Roadmap on Freedom of Association in 2023 and

new national strategies on OSH and skills development.

### Collective Bargaining in the Public Sector

In the Philippines' public sector, Collective Negotiations Agreements (CNAs) exist within a formal but highly constrained bargaining framework. This structure leads CNAs are registered with the Civil Service Commission, and their scope is limited, including economic and wage demands are largely prohibited. Instead, unions negotiate mainly for non-monetary benefits ("Salary Extenders") and operational improvements, not to mention skills development is rarely included and only minimally. These legal restrictions significantly limit the extent of collective bargaining for government employees.

Overall, CNAs function more as administrative improvement agreements rather than full collective bargaining instruments.

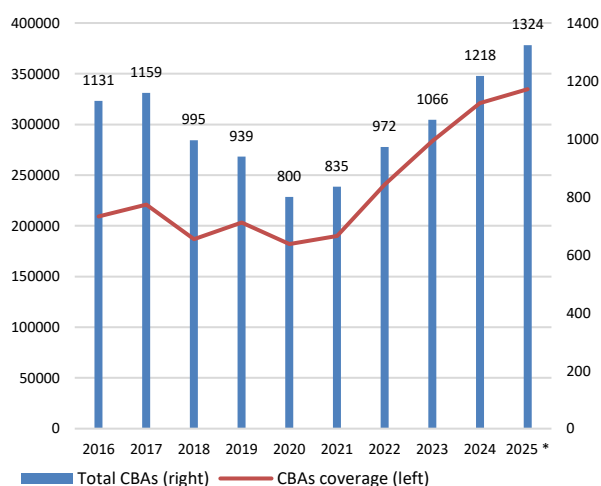
### Weak Collective Bargaining Coverage

Although the Labour Code encapsulates workers' rights to bargain collectively, they are strictly regulated. This situation is mirrored in the low coverage of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). In the private sector, CBAs are not practised at the national level. Instead, they are bargained between management and unions at the enterprise level.

Figure 5 shows that the number of CBAs declined during the late 2010s but rebounded at the beginning of the 2020s. The ratio of CBA coverage to employees was about 1% of employees, indicating that it remains a very underdeveloped labour market area. In contrast, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average collective bargaining coverage was 34%.<sup>22</sup>

In the Philippines, employers have a general attitude of resisting unions: from contesting a petition for certification election filed by a trade union, to interfering during the election, to continuously challenging and reducing scope and coverage of the bargaining unit to refusal to negotiate.

**Figure 5: Collective Bargaining Agreements and coverage in the Philippines, 2016-2025**



\* As of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2025.

Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, *Labour Relations Overview*.

### Key Challenges to Effective Social Dialogue

The effectiveness of social dialogue in the Philippines is limited by low union density, weak CBA coverage, and ongoing restrictions on freedom of association. Despite many tripartite institutions, coordination hurdles remain, and many mechanisms perform primarily advisory roles. The widespread informal economy further sidelines workers from the social dialogue positive impacts (see more in the Informal Economy subsection). At the government level, social dialogue and tripartism is usually limited to the DOLE and DMW and hardly extends to other government agencies. Overall, these factors contest the dynamics of social dialogue.

## Industrial Relations Dispute System

The Philippines' labour dispute system reflects a comprehensive labour dispute resolution architecture, combining formal legal processes with alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods.

### A Multi-Tiered Structure

The labour dispute resolution system in the Philippines is a multi-tiered structure involving several institutions with distinct but interlinked mandates. Disputes raised by unorganized workers typically begin at the DOLE regional offices, where they pass through mandatory conciliation–mediation under the Single-Entry Approach (SEnA). If unresolved, most cases proceed to the National Labour Relations Commission (NLRC), whose Labour Arbiters act as the main first-instance adjudicators, with appeals handled by NLRC commissioners sitting in divisions.

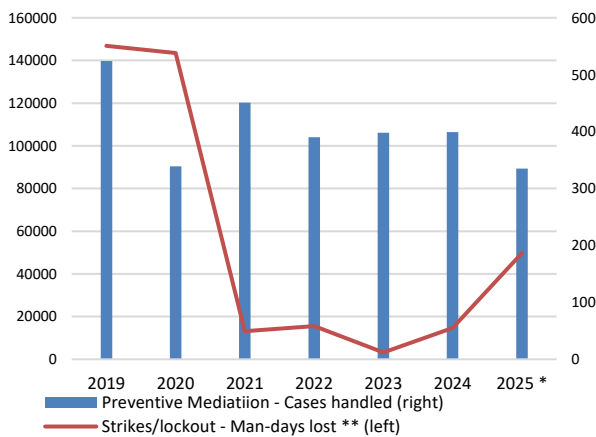
Parallel mechanisms exist for specific types of disputes: the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) provides preventive mediation services for organized workers and oversees the system of voluntary arbitration for collective bargaining and policy-interpretation issues, while the Bureau of Labour Relations (BLR) handles union registration, intra- and inter-union conflicts, and certain collective bargaining matters. Voluntary arbitrators—accredited private practitioners—may be selected by the parties for CBA-related cases, and their awards are generally final and binding. Together, these bodies form a complex but comprehensive framework combining conciliation, arbitration, and quasi-judicial adjudication.

### Mediation Cases Slowed Down

The number of preventive mediation cases slowed down during the beginning of the 2020s, and the average duration to settle fell recently.

Additionally, the concept of “man-days lost” has been relatively low during the 2020s, so far (see Figure 6). However, these official data on strikes appear underestimated; for instance, the FFW alone had 4 strikes, which were not put on DOLE official records. Other trade union centres had widely publicized strikes, too.

**Figure 6: Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) Updates in the Philippines, 2019-2025**



\* Data cover from January to October 2025.

\*\* “Man-days lost” are used to quantify the total amount of work time lost due to strikes or work stoppages.

Source: National Conciliation and Mediation Board.

This slowdown in preventive mediation cases appears to have reduced the system’s capacity to resolve labour conflicts early and at scale. While settlement rates stayed robust, the significantly lower number of workers involved and the drop in monetary compensation per case suggest that many of the disputes mediated were smaller in both size and economic importance. This shift could undercut the preventive function of mediation, potentially leading to more serious disputes later, unless other dispute-resolution mechanisms compensate for the decline. The pandemic likely played a role in this trend, but the change besides highlights a risk to proactive and inclusive conflict management.

### Impact of Weak Resolution System

While the Philippines has a comprehensive labour dispute resolution architecture, the system’s

effectiveness is undermined by fragmented jurisdiction, case backlogs, high procedural complexity, limited access to legal aid, and enforcement weaknesses. Efforts to modernise are underway, but structural and resource challenges remain significant. In addition, NLRC decisions are appealed to the Court of Appeals first, instead of going straight to the Supreme Court.

Dispute-resolution weaknesses are not just a legal problem: they shape how jobs are offered and regulated across the economy. Fixing capacity, enforcement and the legal ambiguities around contractualization would reduce precarious work, speed remedies for workers, cut costs for firms over the medium term, and improve productivity and investment climate.

## STATUS OF WORKING CONDITIONS

### Key Findings

- Real minimum wage growth has been on the rise in recent years.
- Minimum wage hikes are not keeping pace with productivity development.
- Large parts of the workforce remain vulnerable to “endo”-type arrangements.

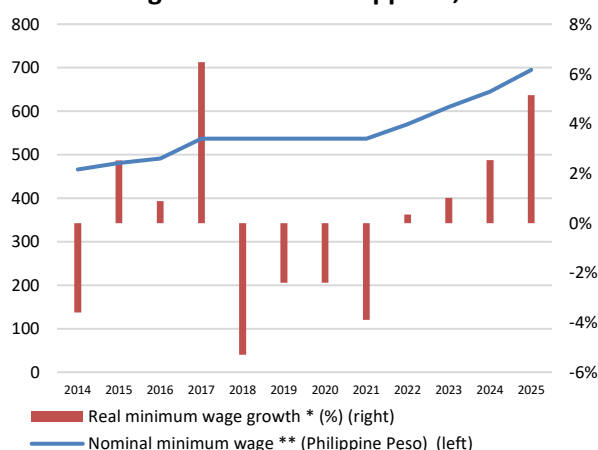
### Complex Minimum Wage System

The Philippines’ government controls and regulates the minimum wage. No workers should be paid less than the minimum wage, and employers who do not pay salaries according to the minimum wage can be fined. This minimum wage system is complex and varies by region and industry. In every region, tripartite regional wage boards set the minimum wages.

### Real Minimum Wage Growth in Progress

The latest adjustments to minimum wage adjustments in the seventeen regions were made in July 2025. These diverge significantly from the highest minimum wage in non-agricultural Philippine Peso (PP) 695 per day (US\$12.1) in the National Capital Region (NCR) to the lowest in several regions with PP 400 (US\$7.0). Figure 7 shows that the real minimum wage (nominal deducted for inflation) deteriorated from 2018 to 2021 due to stalled minimum wage adjustments and the Covid-19 pandemic’s negative impact, holding out workers’ income purchasing power and living conditions, bringing many balancing on the poverty line.

**Figure 7: Nominal minimum wage per day trend and its real growth in the Philippines, 2014-2025**



\* Real minimum wage is based on nominal minimum wage growth deducted of inflation in consumer prices.

\*\* Nominal minimum wage refers to daily minimum wages in non-agriculture sector in the National Capital Region, which is the highest rate in the Philippines.

Source: Trading Economics; own calculation on real minimum wage.

On the positive side, real minimum wage adjustments have rebounded since 2022 in increasing pace. It would be noted that even the highest minimum wage levels fall short of the living wage levels.

### Not Keeping Pace with Productivity

The country is in the middle of gross monthly minimum wage levels in Asia and the Pacific.

Estimations suggest that the Philippines’ annualised productivity growth was 11% from 2020 to 2025 while real minimum wage growth reached 2.8%, pointing to the fact that the minimum wage hikes are not keeping pace with productivity development.

### Domestic Workers’ Different Wage System

Domestic workers are protected by the Kasambahay Law (Magna Carta for Domestic Workers), which entitles household workers to rights linked with other laws. They work under a different wage and benefit system that lays out minimum wage requirements. The minimum monthly wage rate for domestic workers in the NCR is PP 7,000 (US\$122), effective since January 2025. It is notably lower than regular minimum wage requirements, payments into social welfare programmes are lower and mandates only one day off a week. Official data are scarce, but reports suggest that two million or more persons are employed as domestic workers, with nearly 85% being women or girls, some as young as age 15.<sup>23</sup> Organising domestic workers are functioning in the Domestic Workers Union and the United Domestic Workers of the Philippines, among others.

### “Endo” Still Haunts the Labour Market

Contracting or subcontracting has been a hot topic in the Philippines since the late 2010s. The application of controversial contractual forms known as end-of-contract (“endo”) with a maximum five-month period has created loopholes in the Labour Code’s labour-only contracting, and this frees employers from providing workers with benefits (e.g., health and social security). To end the “endos”, the government launched an executive order in 2018, prohibiting any contracting or subcontracting arrangement to circumvent the workers’ right to security of tenure, self-organisation, collective bargaining, and peaceful concerted activities.

Recent years have seen renewed legislative efforts to close those loopholes more decisively, but as of now there is no guarantee that those efforts will succeed; large parts of the workforce remain vulnerable to “endo”-type arrangements.

### *Impacts of Weak Wage System*

While the wage system provides essential worker protection, it too tends to limit job growth in the formal sector, push firms toward automation or informal hiring practices, and create mismatches between mandated wage levels and actual labour-market productivity. Balancing worker welfare with economic competitiveness remains a central challenge for Philippine wage policy.

## TRENDS THAT AFFECT THE LABOUR MARKET

### **Key Findings**

- Workforce is rising -> decent job creation capacity is not keeping pace.
- Skills gaps contribute to high underemployment along with informal employment and wage stagnation.
- 4IR is reshaping the labour market landscape -> displacing some jobs, while creating new, higher-skilled digital roles.

The Philippines’ workforce is shaped by a combination of structural challenges and evolving global trends. The following contemporary issues influence employment dynamics, job quality, and labour market inclusivity:

### *Workforce in a Decisive Period*

The Philippines still enjoys demographic conditions favourable for a dividend: a large, growing working-age population; a relatively young median age; and a workforce that continues to rise. If the country improves education quality,

expands skills training, modernises industries, and creates more jobs, the demographic structure can lead to rapid economic growth, higher productivity, and better wages. If job creation and human-capital investment fail to keep pace, the result may be unemployment, underemployment, skills mismatch, informal work, and wage stagnation — turning the demographic dividend into a demographic burden.

### *Cities as Employment Hubs Gain Importance*

In the Philippines, urban employment is gaining weight in Philippine job creation: since 2020, urban employment passed 50% of total employment, and slowly rising.<sup>24</sup> It comes mainly from services, manufacturing, construction, informal economic activity, and rural-to-urban migration. These trends highlight the centrality of cities for employment growth, but also underscores the need for policies addressing informality, skills development, and equitable access to urban jobs.

### *Drop in Employer-to-total Employment*

A worrisome influence is the falling employer-to-total employment ratio in the Philippines, signalling that job creation capacity is not keeping pace with workforce growth, particularly in the formal sector. Without stronger support for entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprise development, and formal sector expansion, this trend may exacerbate informality, underemployment, and wage stagnation.

### *Skill Levels Remain Underutilised*

The Philippine workforce is predominantly low- to medium-skilled, with a relatively small proportion of highly skilled workers. Skills distribution is uneven across sectors and regions; for instance, rural areas rely more on low-skill agricultural and informal work.

Many young workers have completed secondary education, and college enrolment has increased, but quality of education and relevance to labour-market needs remain challenges. Skills gaps contribute to high underemployment along with informal employment and wage stagnation and limited mobility, triggering encounters in fully harnessing the demographic dividend.

#### **Box 2: Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)**

The 4IR is reshaping the labour market through rising automation, pressure on the skills system, and a shift towards higher-order digital jobs. While the country demonstrates strong policy awareness and a leading regional role in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and digital services, there is a high risk of job displacement without substantial and coordinated investment in skills development and labour-market institutions. There were around 1.7 million Filipinos BPO workers in 2024, equalling a share of 3.5% of total employment.<sup>25</sup>

Digital labour platforms can potentially obscure the relationship between employers and workers that forms the core basis of unionisation. For workers engaged in digital platform work, usually classified as independent contractors, the challenges relate to regularity of work and income, working conditions, social protection, and access to the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.<sup>26</sup>

Research suggests that only one union in the IT-BPO sector, the Unified Employees of Alorica, was registered since 2015.<sup>27</sup> Challenges of unionism in the IT-BPO industry are besides due to insufficient design of services addressing this group's needs. In addition, at least a third of BPO workers operate in informality. IT-BPO hubs are located inside SEZs and enjoy status as ecozones.

#### ***The Philippines Middle Class is Fragile***

Studies found that the Philippine middle class is growing but still fragile, representing about one-third of households.<sup>28</sup> Its growth has been largely urban, service-sector driven, and OFW-dependent. However, middle-class stability is threatened by job quality issues, rising living costs, and limited formal employment opportunities. On this background, strengthening human capital, improving wage structures, and expanding formal sector employment are key to expanding and consolidating the middle class.

## **THEMATIC DIMENSIONS SETTING THE WORKFORCE**

Cross-cutting issues notably affect the labour market when intersecting with various economic, social, and environmental dimensions, impacting workers and employers across multiple sectors.

### **Informal economy**

The informal economy plays a dual role in labour markets – providing employment opportunities and creating challenges related to wages, worker protections, and economic stability.

#### ***Informal Work is Heterogeneous***

Informality spans self-employment, family businesses, street vending, home-based work, casual labour, unpaid family labour, barangay health workers, and even platform workers classified as “independent contractors”, among others. This diversity makes it difficult to capture all informal workers under a single statistical definition.

Many informal workers and enterprises are unregistered or undocumented, which means they may be underreported in official statistics,

not to mentioned dismissing income tax revenue and social contribution.

Because informal workers often lack formal labour contracts or social protection, they are more vulnerable to economic shocks, volatility, and poor working conditions.

### ***Informal Employment is Widespread***

According to the most recent nationally recognised regular survey from 2022, around 17 million Filipinos — roughly one in three employed persons — are informal workers.<sup>29</sup> However, alternative analyses argue the real number could be substantially higher, up to about 20–21 million, or at least 40% of employed.<sup>30</sup> Informal workers are mainly in the agricultural and service sectors.<sup>31</sup> Some indications suggest that the employment in informality is slowly falling, reflecting in job losses in self-employment and unpaid family work.

### ***Legal Hurdles to Protect Informal Workers***

In the Philippines, the legal framework to protect workers has been targeted formal employment — informal workers are mostly outside its coverage. On the positive side, the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy (MACWIE) is a proposed legislative framework to formally recognise and protect the rights of informal workers. It aims to address issues like labour standards, working conditions, and social protection by granting legal rights such as security of tenure, the right to a living wage, access to social security, and protection from arbitrary eviction or discrimination. Various versions of MACWIE have been proposed in different Congresses in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, but still not signed by law. Similar efforts are underway in other regional legislative bodies, such as the Bangsamoro Parliament with its proposed Bill No. 190.

### **Box 3: Organising Informal Workers**

Unionism is emerging in the informal economy in the Philippines. Some unions have been organising informal workers at the community level using strategies in social movement. Other factors are active networks/associations, pilot formalisation projects, inclusion in labour-market planning, and emerging employer engagement. These developments reflect growing recognition that informal workers must not be excluded from labour rights, social protection, and inclusion efforts.

However, progress remains piecemeal, uneven, and fragile. Given the large size of the informal workforce and structural barriers (economic precarity, resource constraints, harassment), only a fraction of informal workers are effectively organised or covered by protection. Much depends on scaling up formalisation programmes, strengthening protections, and ensuring sustained support.

### ***National Informal Economy Forums***

National forums dealing with informal workers and specific policies addressing the status of informal economy workers took place in recent years. Foremost amongst specific union policy recommendations is the 15-Point Labour Agenda rolled out by the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU). The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) is currently developing a policy recommendation, aiming to harmonize existing definitions of informal economy and informal workers by aligning them with ILO's recognised framework. The NAPC organisational structure functions with a basic sector component, representing delegates from 14 distinct sectors. Each sector has its own sectoral council, including one dedicated to workers in the informal sector.

### **Programmes to Address Informality**

The government promotes implementing livelihood programmes and assistance, providing employment opportunities and identifying measures to address the root causes of informality among workers. The scope of these livelihood assistance programmes has been on the rise; for instance, vulnerable persons covered by social assistance rose from 7.8% in 2015 to 23% in 2022 (see more in the Social Protection section).<sup>32</sup>

## **Migration**

Labour migration is a major feature of the Philippine labour market. While it provides remittances, reduces domestic unemployment, and develops some skills abroad, it causes brain drain in critical sectors like healthcare, IT, and engineering. This limits domestic labour productivity, exacerbates skills shortages, and hampers full economic development. Effective policies for retention, reintegration, including transfer of technology, and skills alignment are key to mitigating negative impacts.

### **Relatively Robust Legal Framework**

The Philippines has developed a relatively robust legal and policy framework governing labour migration. Migration issues further have been mainstreamed in the Philippine Development Plans, focusing on ensuring safe and orderly overseas migration. The protection of migrants, the mandate of several Philippine agencies for decades, had become fully institutionalised.

### **Trade Union Migration Action**

In the Philippines, trade-union action links with fair recruitment for migrant workers and gaining ground, including through cross-border union cooperation (with Asian and Arab unions), and engagement in policy-making and consultations

around recruitment regulation and migrant worker welfare.

However, these advances remain fragile and constrained by structural, political, and logistical challenges — from harassment of labour activists to the difficulty of organising people scattered across many countries, to the persistence of illicit recruitment networks and legal gaps abroad.

### **Migration Flow**

The 2018 National Migration Survey (NMS) is the first nationwide survey on migration in the Philippines. It revealed that 40% of Filipinos aged 15 years and over are lifetime migrants. More than half (53%) of the lifetime migrants were women. The past five years have been dominated by rural-rural migration and urban-urban migration. Rural-urban migration has been meagrely reflected in the urbanisation rate, which grew slowly from 46% in 2011 to 49% in 2024.<sup>33</sup>

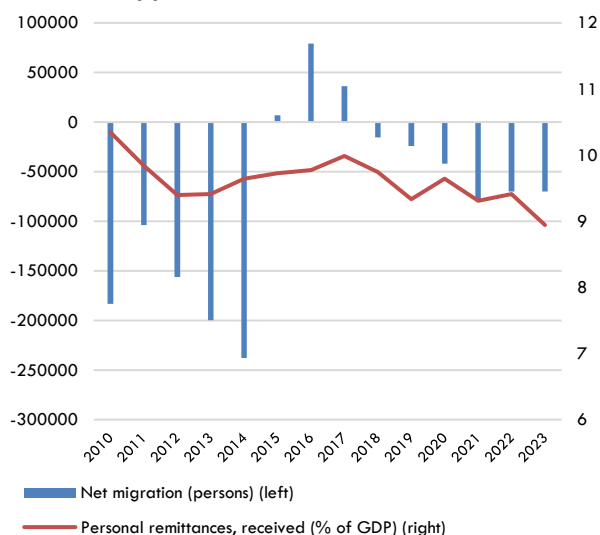
### **Exporting Workers**

Out-migration (emigration) has a long track record in the Philippines, with the world's 9th largest international migrant flow. It has further become part of Filipino culture: About 10 million Filipinos live abroad.<sup>34</sup> The number of OFWs or Filipino workers who worked abroad was estimated at 2.2 million in 2023. The leading destination for these workers is Asia, and a large majority operate with work contracts.<sup>35</sup> Studies found that emigration triggers a brain drain of skilled labour in some sectors in the Philippines; for instance, the health sector.<sup>36</sup>

Figure 8 below shows that the net migration flow has demonstrated some shifts from negative to positive during the 2010s. It reverted at the beginning of the 2020s despite more than two million OFWs returning to the country during the Covid-19 pandemic – sometimes by choice and other times by force – and many struggled with

the possibility of a future without emigration. This negative net migration flow frequently results from Filipinos seeking higher wages in different countries.

**Figure 8: Net migration and personal remittance in the Philippines, 2010-2023**



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

### Labour Migration with Limited Development

Slowly growing returnee migrants support the net migration changes. Investigations have found that these returnees’ potential in human capital development seems limited, as few have acquired more education abroad. In most cases, returnee migrants are overqualified for their jobs in their host countries; only a minority consider employment and investment opportunities in the Philippines as a motive for return. About 70% of returnee migrants reported they experience difficulties finding a job in the Philippines on their return. Often, informal self-employment or business creation are their only options.<sup>37</sup>

### Remittance Central Part of Economy

Personal remittance is a central part of the Philippines’ economy, which peaked at 13% in 2005 but gradually fell, landing at 8.9% of GDP in 2023 (revisit Figure 8). However, it still stands significantly higher than the East Asia and Pacific

average at 0.4%. These remittances are often invested in education and consumption, not to mention much higher than foreign direct investments.

### IDPs face weak rights protection

The Philippines has a large segment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from disasters, conflict, and violence. Concerning disasters, an alarming scale of 62.2 million persons were displaced from 2008 to 2023. These disaster events are mainly related to storms and floods, complicating many workers’ ability to make a living and facing job insecurity, lower income, poor working conditions, and increased poverty. In addition, around 3.3 million persons were internally displaced for conflict and violence reasons in the mentioned period, including 160,000 in 2023.<sup>38</sup>

In the Philippines, there is currently no law relating specifically to the protection of the rights of IDPs. In the absence of a national policy on internal displacement, the Philippines has instead applied a disaster management framework to address displacement caused by terrorism-related conflict.

The country faces numerous challenges in the integration and reintegration of IDPs in practice. They often struggle to access essential services such as healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation facilities. IDPs also have difficulties in finding suitable housing and shelter after being displaced; they are often placed in temporary settlements in overcrowded conditions and without proper infrastructure and basic amenities.<sup>39</sup>

### Child Labour

In principle, child labour has several adverse effects on the labour market. It provides a source of cheap labour, allowing employers to pay lower wages. This factor is often connected with a lack

of decent wages and job opportunities, forcing families to rely on child labour for survival. These child labourers grow into unskilled adults and are more likely to remain in low-paying, unstable jobs.

### Strong Legal Framework

The Philippines’ legal framework to fight child labour rests on strong foundations, such as ratification of relevant ILO conventions and by law prohibitions on child labour for under-15s, not to mention strict hour limits for 15–17-year-olds and bans on hazardous work for under-18s. Furthermore, a supportive policy architecture is covered by national monitoring systems and the National Council Against Child Labor (NCAACL), an inter-agency, multi-stakeholder body co-chaired by the DOLE and the DSWD, where the FFW sits as a council member; and the strategic national plan (2023–2028) to reduce child labour

### Trade Unions and Child Labour

The trade union movement in the Philippines is institutionally and actively involved in the fight against child labour. They are actively involved in the Philippine Programme Against Child Labour (PPACL) and the National Council Against Child Labor (NCAACL), focusing on protecting vulnerable children, strengthening labour rights, promoting decent work, and advocating for policies like the Freedom of Association (FoA) to empower workers to demand better conditions. However, challenges persist with enforcement and anti-union practices.

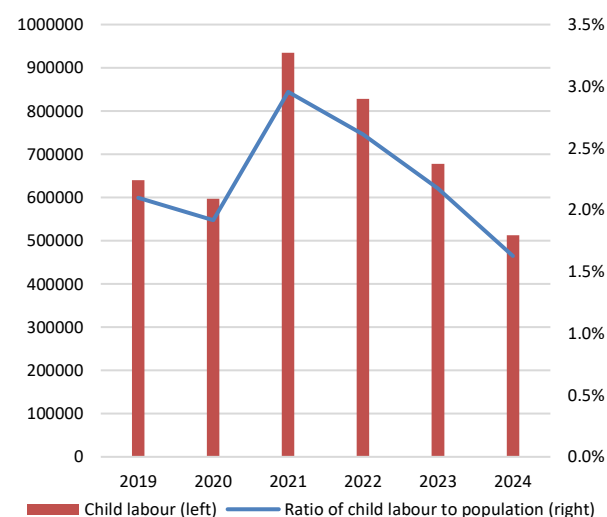
Engagement with issues closely linked to child labour, especially in the informal economy and in preventing forced labour, also lead trade unions involved in the fight against child labour.

### Child Labour is Falling

Although national regulations and plans to fight against child labour, the root of child labour is linked with poverty and armed conflicts in the

country. Reports recorded that the country has demonstrated ‘moderate advancement’ in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.<sup>40</sup> Official data show that child labour has been falling in recent years after the negative impact of the global Covid-19 in 2020/21 (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Number and proportion of child labour in the Philippines, 2019-2024**



Source: Philippines Statistics Authority.

### Child Labour Character and Main Challenges

In the Philippines, child labour continues mostly in rural and remote areas with a lack of education and weak or even no access to government services. Most child labour is often in family settings. Child workers in gold mining, manufacturing, domestic service, drug trafficking, and garbage scavenging face exposure to hazardous working environments.

Main persistent implementation gaps to fights against child labour are linked with limited enforcement capacity, compulsory education age misalignment, and structural poverty and conflict-driven vulnerabilities.

## Gender

Gender shapes labour market dynamics, affecting employment opportunities, wages, job security, and economic growth.

### *Political Commitment but With Hurdles*

The Philippines is among the leading countries globally on gender equality in labour outcomes – particularly compared to many peers in its region. Generally, the country has developed a comprehensive legal framework to protect women in employment: anti-discrimination laws, equal pay requirements, maternity protections, protection from harassment, and provisions for workplace safety and dignity. For many women, these laws provide important rights and protections. However, the trial lies in implementation, coverage (especially informal workers), and overcoming structural/social obstacles (norms, biases, under-enforcement). Thus, legal protections do not automatically guarantee equal opportunity or treatment.

### *Trade Unions and Gender Equity*

The union support for women’s labour rights in the Philippines is in progress and multi-faceted: from dedicated women’s networks to broad union-level labour agendas, from organising informal workers to pushing for collective bargaining reforms. For example, the Women Workers United (WWU) was established by many of the APTU members in January 2023. In November 2024, the WWU launched the Filipino Women Workers’ 15 – Point Agenda towards engendering the Philippine trade unions’ 15 – Point Labour Agenda. These efforts have helped raise awareness, provide organising opportunities, and give many women workers (especially in unionised workplaces) a voice for pay, safety, equality, and social protection.

Several structural constraints (gendered occupational segregation, informal employment,

care burdens), underrepresentation of women in many unions, weak enforcement of labour laws, and fragmented employment forms (contract-based, gig economy, home-based activities) still limit how far union support can reach. In many cases, union gains remain uneven, and many women workers (especially in informal or precarious jobs) remain outside union protection.

### *Employment-Related Gender Disparities*

Filippo men have a significantly higher employment-to-population ratio than women. Similarly, women as employees or employers have considerably lower rates than men, linked to the ‘domestic burden’, making women more likely than men to work part-time or in informal employment in low-productivity sectors (see more in Table 1).

**Table 1: Key indicators for employed gender gaps in the Philippines, 2023**

	Men	Women
Employment-to-population ratio	70%	49%
Employment share	59%	41%
Unemployment rate	2.3%	2.6%
Employees rate	66%	60%
Self-employed rate	34%	41%
Employers rate	3.0%	2.1%

Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Like in many other countries, cultural and social norms are other deep-rooted gender stereotypes often view men as breadwinners and women as caregivers in the Philippines.

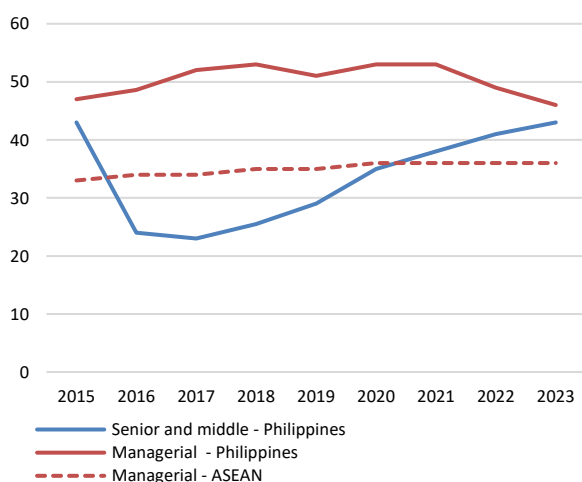
### *Diverse Progress in Women Leadership*

Data suggest that Filipino women in more formal work are gaining some upsurge in senior and middle management in recent years, reaching its 2015-level. It is worth mentioning that a dramatic drop at the middle of the 2010s is best understood as the result of converging structural and labour-market factors, including economic liberalisation

and organisational restructuring, as well as increased movement of women into informal or part-time work.

Among Filipino women in management positions has been hovering substantially above the ASEAN average but lost some pace in recent years (see Figure 10). This proportion reflects several statistical hurdles, such as the dominance of women in informal enterprises and small sample sizes in the formal sector. Thus, the scope of these managerial positions does not indicate gender parity in high-level corporate or political leadership, which remains limited.

**Figure 10: Proportion of women in senior and middle management and management positions in the Philippines and ASEAN, %, 2015-2023**



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

## Youth

Youth is the labour market’s future backbone, playing a central role in shaping employment trends, productivity, and economic development.

### Deflating Youth Bulge

The Philippines’ population structure had a ‘youth bulge’ – a term used to describe the increase in the youthful population – but it is deflating. Currently, around 25% of the working-age population were

youth (aged 15-24 years) accounted for a substantial portion of the population, reaching about 20.1 million.<sup>41</sup>

### Youth Policies in Progress

The Philippines has a broad and active policy framework addressing youth in the labour market, centred on the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) 2013-2028, supported by the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028 and numerous education and training acts (see more in the Education and Training section). Major policy instruments, such as the JobStart Act, aim to improve school-to-work transitions. Despite progress, youth still face structural barriers, including high NEET rates among women, limited formal job opportunities, and incomplete integration of employment pathways.

### Unbalanced Youth Job Demands

The Philippines’ youth employment-to-population ratio fell by nine percentage points during the last decade, reaching a rate of 25% in 2023.<sup>42</sup> Some of the main issues that explain this drop concern delayed workforce entry and inactivity, shortages of formal-sector job opportunities, gaps in employment pathways, and youth emigration. These factors impact the labour market in several aspects, such as reinforces informality, worsens skills mismatch, reduces labour-market dynamism and future earnings for young people.

### Youth Employment Characteristics

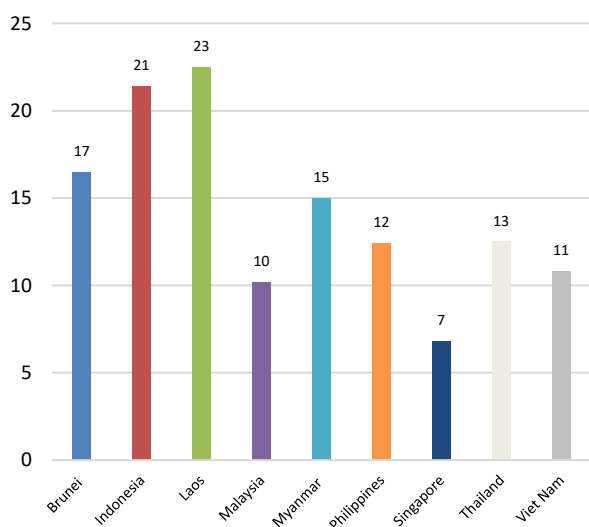
Philippine youth employment is characterized by significantly higher unemployment than adults, which is common among developed countries. Notably, the country has a lower youth unemployment rate than the ASEAN average, 6.9% vs. 9.6%, respectively.<sup>43</sup> Instead, young Filipinos face a difficult school-to-work transition, a prevalence in vulnerable/low-skill jobs (like retail/trade, agriculture), gender disparities (youth women fare worse), and a major trend of

migration (OFWs) for better opportunities. Ongoing efforts are focusing on skills development (digital/green skills) and linking education to formal jobs. They further often struggle with finding decent work, despite some NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates declining.

### Remarkable Drop in the NEET Rate

The not-in-education, employment, or training (NEET rate) better indicates the extent of barriers facing young people in the labour market than the unemployment rate does. The Philippines' NEET rate fell significantly during the last decade, with a drop by sixteen percentage points, landing at 12% in 2023 and located at the middle-level among ASEAN countries (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training in ASEAN countries, %, latest data**



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

This positive trend signals that there were some improvements in its labour market, primarily due to stronger job creation in quality wage/salary jobs, increased labour force participation, and better economic conditions. But challenges like financial constraints for training and skills gaps persist, influencing why some youth remain NEET.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Key Findings

- The education system is reforming -> persistent gaps in quality, infrastructure and job creation.
- Employed are getting better educated -> women supersede men at the advanced level.
- The TVET enrollees were on the rise in recent years but not superseded its 2019-peak.
- Firms offering formal training fell significantly.

Education and training connection to the labour market refers to the relationship between the education system, vocational training programmes, and the market's needs. It highlights how education and skills development prepare individuals to meet employers' demands, improve employability, and support economic growth.

### Reforming Education System

The Philippines implemented comprehensive education law and policy reforms during the last decade. Especially the K-12 programme and efforts to strengthen technical-vocational education was geared to improve the alignment between skills and labour market needs, enhancing employability, productivity, and social mobility. However, persistent gaps in quality, infrastructure, and job creation limit their full impact; for instance, labour market benefits are often concentrated in urban centres, leaving rural areas underserved. Additionally, outcomes have been uneven of education reform that led to the K-12 system that added two years of senior high school to old system that only had four, highly dependent on track, location, industry linkages, and implementation quality.

### Trade Unions and Education System

Trade unions in the education sector in the Philippines are concentrated within the public-sector labour movement but are also in the private sector. Public-sector unionisation has grown in recent years, but fragmentation and limitations on collective bargaining continue to shape the effectiveness of education-sector representation. Unionised teachers in the private sector can bargain for wages. Among the major issue they face is the strict implementation of sharing in tuition fee increases, where teachers and staff should get 70%. There is the issue of longer tenure (3 years) in the sector, compared to other industries where workers are automatically regularized after 6 months of employment. With a declining education budget and an increasing national teacher shortage, education unions are demanding greater governmental investment to recruit and retain teachers and ensure quality education for all.<sup>44</sup>

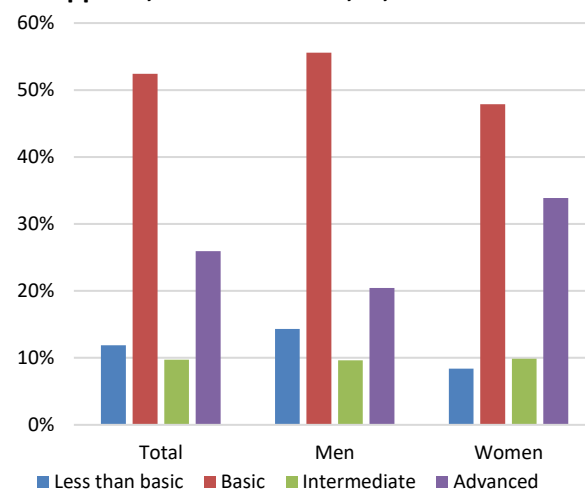
### Education Sector in Progress

In the Philippines, mean years of schooling is rising. At least half of Filipinos in employment are dominated by basic education, and a quarter with advanced education, even with a higher bulk for women than men; those workers with intermediate education represent the lowest group (see more in Figure 12).

The labour market is increasingly polarized: decent opportunities are rising for those with secondary or tertiary education, while employment for basic-education holders is declining. Instead, middle-skill jobs are scarce, pushing many with basic education out of stable employment or into informal, low-quality work, not to mention education quality and skills mismatch reduce the employability of basic-educated workers. Structural issues — like the dominance of informal jobs — limit the benefits of having basic education. These factors trend

toward inequality, where better-educated workers adapt, but basic-educated workers face declining employment prospects.

**Figure 12: Employment by education share in the Philippines, Total & Gender, %, 2023**



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

### Education Sector Encounters Challenges

The Philippines falls behind in the region in education and shows poor performance in international standardised student assessments. For instance, the Philippines has been haunted by one of the highest dropout rates among the ASEAN countries. Some of the reasons are that many students skip class to find some income to support their families, linking with massive internally displaced persons due to climate changes impact or conflicts in zones like the southern regions of Mindanao disrupt families' lives. Additionally, a recent study found that the Philippines ranked sixth to the last in reading and mathematics and third to the last in science among 81 countries. The Philippines moreover ranks at the bottom of the recent Pisa test on creative thinking, scoring the lowest among the 64 ranked countries in the report.<sup>45</sup>

## Vocational Training

### Solid TVET Legal Framework

The Philippines’ Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is covered by a broad legal framework (see Appendix Table 10).

The main institution for TVET in the Philippines is the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), a government agency overseeing policy and standards, working alongside other bodies like the Department of Education (DepEd) for school-based TVET, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for higher education linkages, and various public/private training centres, universities, and enterprises that deliver programs. Key partners include other government departments (labour, trade, agriculture) and financial institutions, forming a multi-sectoral system.

### TVET Policy and Reform

The National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan (NTESDP) 2023-2028 sets the TVET sector’s roadmap for the next five years and links with the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028. The NTESDP 2023-2028 has six strategic pillars, including expanded and sustained collaborations with industry, government, academia, labour, and other stakeholders. It envisions being smart and innovative and substantially addressing learning poverty.

### Trade Unions in TVET Structures

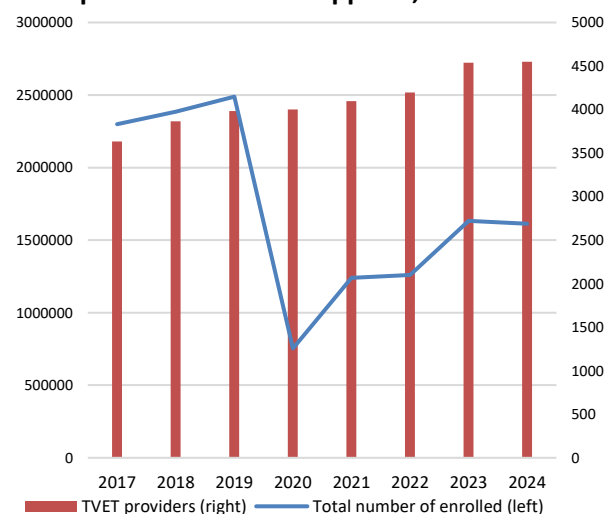
Six trade union representatives on the Board of TESDA play a key role in TVET policy formulation and implementation. Trade unions are similarly involved in policy implementation of skills development at the enterprise level through technical training institutes, which are set up from their initiative; in some cases, trade unions participate in labour-management committees.

Although the Board of TESDA, which operates with full-time technical support from government representatives and their respective agencies and employers, have their own Human Resources departments, organised workers’ representatives do not have the same level of support.<sup>46</sup>

### Evolution of TVET

In the Philippines, there has been a growth in the TVET providers, with private institutions dominating at nine out of ten (90%). The high share of private TVET providers is attributed to the relatively low flow of government funding through TVET scholarship programmes. The TVET enrollees were on the rise until the global COVID-19 crisis caused a deep dive in the TVET enrolment rate in 2020, and it has not yet reached the 2019 peak (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Total number of enrolled in TVET and TVET providers in the Philippines, 2017-2024**



Source: The Philippines’ Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Annual Reports.

The low enrolment stance triggered a serious inward reflection and assessment of the TVET system, responding to the need for the economic, pedagogical, and infrastructure challenges of providing hands-on practical training using tools and machines through online training. Reform through the Enterprise-Based Education and

Training (EBET) Framework Act of 2024 is in force, including regulations are established. The government — especially TESDA, with DOLE and industry partners — is now promoting the EBET framework to encourage enterprise-led skills training, enhance workforce readiness, and better align training with labour market needs.

The share of all secondary education students enrolled in vocational programmes in the Philippines has been significantly lower than the regional average, 9.7% vs 16% respectively. On the other hand, both are in line with the share of all students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes at 37%.<sup>47</sup> TVET education presents a balanced gender participation, even slightly higher for women among the graduates, suggesting that TVET programmes have been successfully promoting inclusivity and accessibility.<sup>48</sup>

### **Firms Reducing Formal Training**

Filippino firms offering formal training fell by 60% in 2015 to 42% of firms in 2023 but remains seven percentage points higher than the East Asia & Pacific average at 32%.<sup>49</sup> Formal firms continue to be a small group compared to the widespread informal micro- and small enterprises. Despite efforts, enterprise-based training remains low and concentrated mainly in more industrialised regions. TESDA found that industry support and commitment were not fully achieved, particularly regarding industry involvement in labour market information, assessment, certification, and TVET financing. This situation triggered the mentioned EBET Framework Act, introducing mobile laboratories, which aimed to increase training participation and give opportunities for productivity, but was not sufficiently met.<sup>50</sup>

### **TVET System Hurdles**

Some of the main challenges in the Philippines TVET sector entail the low employability of

graduates seeking specific occupations. Around two out of three (65%) of Philippine graduates (job applicants seeking specific work positions) are not employable in their field of choice.<sup>51</sup> The fast pace of technology development is challenging the future skills requirements and making many jobs obsolete through automation, digitalisation, and robotisation.

Studies have revealed that people in the Philippines are more likely to have plans to emigrate when they receive vocational training. This situation links the training programmes to the domestic labour market; for example, if training does not lead to the right job or a higher income, it could increase incentives to withdraw from the domestic labour market and search for jobs abroad. It is possible that people are participating in vocational training programmes to find employment abroad.<sup>52</sup>

While recent education reforms have boosted the growth of the TVET sector, lack of adequate resources has become a concern; for instance, TESDA’s endemic resource constraints and organisational capacity weigh on its ability to respond to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

## **SOCIAL PROTECTION**

<b>Key Findings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The social protection system is supported by a relatively strong legal framework.</li> <li>• Social protection coverage has been underdeveloped but demonstrated some upturns.</li> <li>• Mounting financial pressure on the pension system.</li> <li>• Scope of informal social protection is more limited.</li> </ul>

Social protection and the labour market are closely connected to develop a country's welfare, as social protection programmes play a central role in enhancing the well-being of workers, promoting job security, and reducing poverty.

### ***Comprehensive Legal Basis and Policy***

In the Philippines, the social protection system is supported by a relatively strong legal framework based on separate sector-specific and programme-specific laws. The government currently operates with the Social Protection Plan (SPP) 2023-2028, with three strategic focus areas: i) complete implementation of the social protection floor, ii) development of adaptive and shock-responsive social protection programs, and iii) rationalisation, modernisation and integration of the social protection system.

Although Philippine social insurance traditionally focused on the formal sector, recent laws and programmes are actively expanding coverage to informal workers, self-employed, and gig workers. However, challenges remain in reaching everyone due to issues like irregular income and awareness (see ahead).

### ***Social Protection Institutional Structure***

The Philippines' social protection system is organised across multiple institutions with distinct mandates covering social insurance, health, work injury compensation, social assistance, and labour market programmes, including:

- Social insurance for private-sector workers is administered by the Social Security System (SSS), while the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) covers public employees.
- Universal health coverage is provided through PhilHealth, which ensures automatic enrolment for all Filipinos.

- Work-related injury compensation is managed by the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC) in coordination with SSS and GSIS.
- Social assistance programmes, including the national conditional cash transfer scheme (4Ps), fall under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
- Labour market and employment-related measures are led by DOLE and TESDA.

These components are integrated under the national Social Protection Operational Framework and Strategy, which seeks to coordinate policies across agencies and strengthen system coherence.

### ***Tripartite Representation***

Tripartite representation is a key feature in Philippine social protection, observed in bodies like the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (NTIPC) and discussions on social security (SSS, PhilHealth), where social partners collaborate on policy, address labour issues, and guide social dialogue. However, implementation and effectiveness vary. Recently, the first tripartite plus meeting on integrated formalisation brought together tripartite representatives, including representation from the informal economy, to extend social protection and decent work to curb the informality.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Upsurge in Social Protection Coverage***

In the Philippines, social protection has been somewhat underdeveloped compared with other countries in Southeastern Asia. A worrisome trend is that population covered by at least one social protection benefit dropped significantly in recent years, falling ten percentage point below the regional average. This stagnant is not due to lack of programmes alone — but because the structure of the economy (informality), mismatched design of social protection schemes, weak governance, and insufficient funding combine to exclude a large part of the population. On the positive side,

the country demonstrated some upsurges in proportion of vulnerable persons covered by social assistance, not to mention staying ahead of regional level concerning employed covered in the event of work injury (see more in Table 2).

**Table 2: Proportion of population covered by social protection services in the Philippines and Southeastern Asia (SEA), %, latest data**

Indicator	Philippines	SEA
Population covered by at least one social protection benefit	35%	45%
Persons above retirement age receiving a pension	66%	45%
Persons with severe disabilities collecting disability social protection benefits	2.2%	28%
Unemployed receiving unemployment benefits	5.6%	12%
Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits	15%	29%
Employed covered in the event of work injury	33%	29%
Children/households receiving child/family cash benefits	9.9%	20%
Poor persons covered by social protection systems	100%	-
Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance	23%	37%

Source: International Labour Organisation, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

The social insurance system remains haunted by deep leakages to the richest groups. On the other hand, coverage of social safety net programmes is much better targeting the poorest quintiles.<sup>54</sup>

### Pension System in Progress

The Philippines faces an ageing population, supported by a slowly upsurge in life expectancy. This situation leads challenges of an ageing population, like other Asian economies, with mounting financial pressure on social protection, such as eldercare pensions. Projections suggest that the share of elderly population (60+) in the country rises from 8.5% in 2020 to 11% in 2030.

Social insurance for workers is administered by the Social Security System (SSS), which is compulsory for employees from the private sector, self-employed, and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Employees up to age 60 earning more than PHP 1,000 (US\$17) a month are covered by the basic, earnings-related and minimum pensions. There are special systems for government employees and military personnel.

The country has experienced a remarkable upsurge in the coverage of persons above 60 receiving a pension in recent years, from 40% in 2015 to 66% in 2021. Still, one out of three (34%) of older Filipino people are left with no pension. Those receiving a pension collect a low allowance, even one of the weakest in the region, currently landing the minimum pension for both basic and earnings-related components at PHP1,200 (US\$21) a month, which is far below the non-agriculture minimum wage (National Capital Region) of PHP18,765 (US\$327).

Reforming SSS in 2025 marks a positive update for contribution-based pensions — especially for the most vulnerable pensioners. The “basic minimum” pension scheme benefits are enhanced, and pensioners benefit from periodic increases plus allowances. However, because the pension still depends on number of years contributed and given the modest absolute amounts relative to living costs, the system likely still provides only modest retirement protection for many — especially low-income, informal, or intermittently employed workers.

### Informal Social Protection

Informal social protection in the Philippines is moreover delivered, primarily relies on family, community networks, and self-organised groups, supplemented by government programmes that informal workers often struggle to access due to low awareness, high costs, and lack of employer

support. Key mechanisms involve community-led information drives, local government engagement via Public Employment Service Offices, and other

innovative schemes for savings, aiming to build resilience against shocks like health issues, job loss, or disasters.<sup>55</sup>

## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

**Table 3: Legal framework on industrial relations in the Philippines**

<b>National legal framework</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 126 (EO 126), January 31, 1987, Reorganizing the Ministry of Labor and Employment and for Other Purposes Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labor Code of Philippines, Rule XII of Book V, establishing the Labor-Management Council.</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 126, January 31, 1987, Reorganizing the Ministry of Labor and Employment and for Other Purposes.</li> <li>• Amended Rules and Regulations Governing the Exercise of the Right of Government Employees to Organize, 2005.</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 403 establishing the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council.</li> <li>• Republic Act No. 6975 of December 13, 1990, Establishing the Philippine National Police Under a Reorganized Department of the Interior and Local Government, and for other Purposes.</li> <li>• Republic Act No. 10395 of March 14, 2013, Strengthening Tripartism, Amending for the Purpose Article 275 of Presidential Decree No. 442, as amended, otherwise known as the “Labor Code of the Philippines”.</li> <li>• Department Order No. 40-03 (Series of 2003) Amending the Implementing Rules of Book V of the Labor Code of the Philippines.</li> <li>• Labour Code of the Philippines, Presidential Decree No. 442, s. 1974 (as Amended and renumbered by Department of Labour and Employment Advisory Note No. 1 of July 2015).</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 180 providing guidelines for the exercise of the right to organize of government employees, creating a public sector labour-management council, and for other purposes.</li> </ul>

Source: International Labour Organization, IRLEX, Philippines.

**Table 4: Legal reservations in the rights to organise, collective bargaining, and strikes in the Philippines**

<b>Right to organise</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive representativeness or minimum number of members required for the establishment of a union.</li> <li>• Restrictions on trade unions’ right to establish branches, federations, and confederations or to affiliate with national and international organisations.</li> <li>• Restrictions on the right to elect representatives and self-administer in full freedom.</li> <li>• Administrative authorities’ power to unilaterally dissolve, suspend or de-register trade union organisations.</li> <li>• Several public servants, including prison guards, firefighters, and uniformed military personnel, do not have the right to form and join unions.</li> <li>• Non-nationals or migrants can only join unions if their home country permits migrants from the Philippines to join unions.</li> <li>• Managerial staff are not allowed to join unions. Supervisors may join their own organisations, but not general workers' unions.</li> <li>• Temporary workers do not have the right to join and form unions.</li> </ul>
<b>Right to collective bargaining</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive requirements in respect to trade unions’ representativeness or minimum number of members required to bargaining collectively.</li> <li>• Restrictions on the duration, scope of application or coverage of collective agreements.</li> <li>• Government employees have a more restrictive bargaining law concerning Collective Negotiation Agreements (CNAs), which do not allow them to bargain on economic demands.</li> <li>• Only a union that has previously negotiated a collective agreement with the employer can strike.</li> </ul>
<b>Right to strike</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All avenues of conciliation must have been exhausted before a strike can be called.</li> <li>• Excessive civil or penal sanctions for workers and unions involved in non-authorized strike actions.</li> <li>• Strike by civil servants is not allowed. Strikes by government employees are channelled into mediation and arbitration procedures. It is worth mentioning that there had been experiences in the past where strikes and mass actions were held successfully.</li> </ul>

Source: International Trade Union Confederation, *Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, The Philippines: Legal*, December 2025.

**Table 5: Status of ratified ILO Conventions in the Philippines**

Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
<b>Fundamental Conventions</b>		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1953
	C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1953
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930	2005
	C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1960
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973	1998
	C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2000
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1953
	C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1960
Occupational safety and health	C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981	Not ratified
	C187 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006	2019
<b>Governance Conventions</b>		
Labour inspection	C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	2024
	C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964	1976
Tripartism	C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	1991
<b>Technical Conventions (Up-to-date)</b>		
Children and young persons	C077 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946	1960
Wages	C094 - Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949	1953
	C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	1953
Migrant Workers	C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949	2009
	C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975	2006
Specific categories of workers	C110 - Plantations Convention, 1958	1968
	C149 - Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977	1979
	C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011	2012
Social Security	C118 - Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962	1994
	C157 - Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982	1994
	C165 - Social Security (Seafarers) Convention (Revised), 1987 *	2004
Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and industrial relations	C141 - Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975	1979
	C151 - Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978	2017
Employment policy and promotion	C159 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983	1991
Occupational safety and health	C176 - Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995	1998
Seafarers	C185 - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003	2012
	MLC - Maritime Labour Convention, 2006	2012
Equality of opportunity and treatment	C190 - Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019	2024

Source: International Labour Organization, NORMLEX, Philippines, December 2025.

**Table 6: Status of organised workers in the Philippines, 2025**

Indicator	Value
Public sector organisations	2,084
Number of members	691,274
Private sector organisations	18,821
Number of members	1,707,746
Workers' Associations organisations *	136,153
Number of members	4,362,792

\* Workers associations (informal sector) refer to an association of workers organised for the mutual aid and protection of its members or for any legitimate purpose other than collective bargaining.

Note: Data represent 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2025.

Source: Philippines' Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview, November 2025.

**Table 7: Central tripartite institutions in the Philippines**

Central tripartite institutions
<b>Central consultative bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Tripartite Advisory Committee (NTAC).</li> <li>National Tripartite Industrial Peace Councils (NTIPC) and its various sub-committees, including the Standing Committee on Social Dialogue. These committees are spread out at regional, provincial, city, and municipality levels.</li> <li>National Industrial Peace Council Monitoring Body.</li> </ul>
<b>Other policy-making bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).</li> <li>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).</li> <li>Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC).</li> <li>National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC).</li> <li>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).</li> <li>Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC).</li> <li>Tripartite Voluntary Arbitration Advisory Council (TVAAC).</li> </ul>
<b>Other bodies with policy-making functions where the DoLE and social partners are represented</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Security Commission (SSC).</li> <li>Home Mutual Development Fund (HDMF).</li> <li>Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).</li> <li>Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC).</li> </ul>
<b>Quasi-Judicial Bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Labour Relations Commission (NLRC).</li> <li>National Wages and Productivity (NWPC).</li> </ul>
<b>Quasi-Legislative Bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs).</li> </ul>

Source: Philippines Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview.

**Table 8: Alternative Disputes Resolution Results in the Philippines, 2019-2025**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 *
<b>Preventive Mediation</b>							
Cases handled	524	339	451	390	398	399	335
Settlement rate	90%	87%	92%	91%	87%	97%	93%
Average duration to settle	30	35	35	32	27	29	29
<b>Strikes/lockouts</b>							
Cases handled	21	11	4	8	144	163	119
Man-days lost	146,865	143,474	13,160	15,489	3,209	14,666	49,705

\* Data from 2025 covers from January to October.

Source: : The Department of Labour and Employment, Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) Updates

**Table 9: The Philippines' key workforce data**

Indicator	Value
Working Age Population	79,583,600
Labour force participation rate	60%
<i>Men</i>	71%
<i>Women</i>	50%
Employed share	
<i>Urban</i>	52%
<i>Rural</i>	48%
<i>Public</i>	9%
<i>Private</i>	91%
Employed by aggregated sector share	
<i>Agriculture</i>	22%
<i>Industry</i>	18%
<i>Service</i>	61%

Source: The Philippines National Labour Force Survey 2023.

**Table 10: Central education laws/acts in the Philippines**

<b>Laws</b>	<b>Issues</b>
Kindergarten Education Act of 2012.	This act makes kindergarten education the first stage of compulsory and mandatory formal education before Grade 1.
Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.	This act provides at least one year of preschool and 12 years of basic education.
Anti-Bullying Act of 2013	This act encompasses all public and private basic-education schools and they are mandated to adopt anti-bullying policies and establish intervention programmes for both the child victim and the child bully.
Fast-Tracked Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 2013	This act promotes the hiring of teachers from among the graduates of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses and it enhances the current science and technology scholarships offered by the Department of Science and Technology;
Rural Farm Schools Act	This act aims to provide an alternative mode of secondary education in rural areas with the establishment of rural farm schools in the country (and these are to follow the general secondary education curriculum with additional courses focused on agri-fishery arts.
Iskolar ng Bayan Act of 2014	This act mandates all state universities and colleges to admit and provide scholarship grants to the top 10 public high-school graduates subject to some requirements and conditions provided by the law and the implementing rules and regulations to be formulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the DepEd.
Palarong Pambansa Act of 2013	This act institutionalised the conduct of the Palarong Pambansa every year, making the event the “primary avenue for providing in-school sports opportunities to improve the physical, intellectual and social well-being of the youth.”
Labour Education Act of 2021	This act integrates labour education into the tertiary education curriculum. These changes make up one of the most ambitious and complex education sector reform processes undertaken in the country’s education system.
<b>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</b>	
Enterprise-Based Education and Training (EBET) Framework Act of 2024	Its purpose is to institutionalize and strengthen enterprise-based training programs (including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, learnerships, and upskilling) under a unified, industry-driven, competency-based framework to help address job-skills mismatch, unemployment, and underemployment in the Philippines.
Republic Act No. 11230 of 2019	An act instituting a Philippine labour force competencies and competitiveness programme and free access to technical-vocational education and training.
Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2016	This act has four components: free higher education, free TVET, tertiary-education subsidy and the student loan programme.
Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Act of 2015	This act unifies all modalities of publicly funded Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid and Student Loans for Tertiary Education. The UniFAST Act rationalises the allocation, utilization and client-targeting of government resources and improves access to quality higher and technical education for the beneficiaries.
Republic Act No. 10650 (“Open Distance Learning Act”) of 2014.	Expands and further democratizes access to quality tertiary education through the promotion and application of open learning as a philosophy of access to educational services.

<p>Republic Act No. 10771 (Green Jobs Act) of 2016)</p>	<p>The Green Jobs Act promotes the creation of “green jobs” and employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment in the agriculture, industry, or services sectors. The act further mandates the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) to coordinate with other government agencies in formulating a National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan on the expansion, enhancement, and utilization of the labour force, both in the private and public sector.</p>
<p>Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013</p>	<p>This act provides senior high school students with specialised tracks such as the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL).</p>
<p>JobStart Philippines Act</p>	<p>This act promotes a programme of the Department of Labour and Employment which shortens youth’s school-to-work transition by enhancing job seekers’ knowledge and skills acquired in the formal education or technical training and enabling them to become more responsive to the demands of the labour market. With the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders, the programme will also help develop the life skills of youth, including those relevant to the values of professionalism and work appreciation, and provide trainees with a conducive and safe work environment or an avenue where they can apply relevant theories and code of ethics.</p>
<p>National TechVoc Day Act</p>	<p>This act is an advocacy campaign through lead agencies TESDA and DepEd, which aims to provide opportunities for all government entities to engage in activities in celebration of National TechVoc Day. Through this Act, relevance of technical-vocational education in the Philippine economy is better appreciated and supported.</p>
<p>Agri-Fishery Mechanization Act</p>	<p>This act firms up the policy of modernizing Philippine agriculture through agricultural mechanization. Industrialization for economic development is recommended as a strategy to support agricultural development. The act aims for increased production of farmers and fisherfolk while boosting the interest of the youth, undergraduates and graduates on agricultural engineering courses and technical vocational programmes in agricultural and fisheries mechanisation.</p>
<p>Sec. 24 of the Magna Carta for Women or the Right to Education and Training</p>	<p>The magna mandates the State to ensure the following: “(a) Women migrant workers have the opportunity to undergo skills training, if they so desire, before taking on a foreign job, and possible retraining upon return to the country; (b) Gender-sensitive training and seminars; and (c) Equal opportunities in scholarships based on merit and fitness especially to those interested in research and development aimed towards women-friendly farm technology.”</p>

Source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

**Table 11: The Nagkaisa labour coalition, December 2024**

Nagkaisa
Alliance of Free Workers (AFW)
All Filipino Workers Confederation (AFWC)
Automobile Industry Workers Alliance (AIWA)
Alab Katipunan
Association of Genuine Labor Organizations (AGLO)
Associated Labor Unions (ALU)
Associated Labor Unions- Association of Professional Supervisory Officers Technical Employees Union (ALU-APSOTEU)
ALU-Metal
Associated Labor Unions-Philippine Seafarers' Union (ALU-PSU)
ALU-Textile
ALU-Transport
Associated Labor Unions-Visayas Mindanao Confederation of Trade Unions (ALU-VIMCOMTU)
Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL)
Association of Trade Unions (ATU)
Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP)
Confederation of Independent Unions (CIU)
Confederation of Labor and Allied Social Services (CLASS)
Construction Workers Solidarity (CWS), Federation of Coca-Cola Unions (FCCU)
Federation of Free Workers (FFW)
Kapisanan ng Maralitang Obrero (KAMAPO)
Katipunan
Pambansang Kilusan ng Paggawa (KILUSAN)
Kapisanan ng mga Kawani sa Koreo sa Pilipinas (KKKP)
Labor education and Research Network (LEARN)
League of Independent Bank Organizations (LIBO)
Manggagawa para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (MAKABAYAN)
MARINO
National Association of Broadcast Unions (NABU)
National Federation of Labor Unions (NAFLU)
National Mines and Allied Workers Union (NAMAWU)
National Association of Trade Unions (NATU)
National Confederation of Labor (NCL)
National Confederation of Transport Union (NCTU)
National Union of Portworkers in the Philippines (NUPP)
National Union of Workers in Hotel, Restaurant and Allied Industries (NUWHRAIN)
Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA)
Pepsi Cola Employees Union of the Philippines (PEUP)
Philippine Government Employees Association (PGEA)
Pinag-isang Tinig at Lakas ng Anakpawis (PIGLAS)
Philippine Integrated Industries Labor Union (PILLU)
Philippine Independent Public Sector Employees Association (PIPSEA)
Partido Manggagawa (PM)
Philippine Metalworkers Alliance (PMA)
Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)
Philippine Transport and General Workers Organization (PTGWO)
SALIGAN
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
Workers Solidarity Network (WSN)

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