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YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION COSTS & CHALLENGES PHILIPPINES

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Suffrage is the bedrock of any democratic nation. In times of challenges for human rights and effective citizen participation, the conduct of elections provides an unequivocal litmus test of this core dimension of democracy.

Elections in every country merit closer examination and study. For elections to be genuine, they must be free, fair and inclusive. Inclusion, a modern political buzzword, underlines the increasing awareness of the need to give voice to groups based on gender, religion, race, ethnicity and, last but not least, age.

Young people have long sought a seat at the table – they deserve to be listened to because the issues at stake in elections will directly impact their future more than any other age group. Historically, young people have driven major democratic changes, and the Philippines, one of Asia’s oldest democracies, is no exception. Groups such as the Propaganda Movement and the Katipunan spearheaded the youth activism that drove the two People Power Revolutions that restored Philippine democracy.¹

The role of youth in nation-building is recognised by the 1987 Constitution, which ensures the involvement of young people in civic affairs. This is also reflected in the local government structure, which includes the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), a youth council at the barangay (community) level, where youth can vote starting from the age of 15, three years before the standard voting age of 18.

Although experts are divided on the impact of the “youth vote”, it cannot be denied that young people make up a substantial portion of the Philippine electorate.² The issue is how, and how successfully, youth participation is supported.

This case study examines the level of investment in youth voter registration, the costs for young Filipinos in exercising this right and the effectiveness of past and present efforts to make the process more inclusive.

¹ The first People Power Revolution (1986) led to the ouster of then President Ferdinand Marcos, while the second, in 2001, overthrew President Joseph Estrada amid corruption allegations.

² “Comelec: 56% of voting population are aged 18 to 41,” INQUIRER.net, February 8, 2022

Background

The Philippines' voter registration system is unique, closely linked with the country's equally distinctive electoral framework. Elections in the Philippines are conducted at the national level, for the President and members of the Congress, and at local levels ranging from provincial to barangay (village - the smallest unit of government of the Philippines) and even Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) elections. In addition to elections reserved for the residents of the recently established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (which replaced the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao), these youth council elections are a distinctive feature of the Philippine electoral system, allowing for the participation of young people as young as 15, whereas the legal voting age for all other elections is 18.

Voter registration in the Philippines is active. It is not mandatory. Filipinos who wish to vote must submit an application for registration together with the necessary documentation, following which their biometrics are captured. The process is carried out in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations such as the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines (1985), the Voter's Registration Act (1996), the Mandatory Biometrics Voter Registration Act (2013) as well as resolutions issued by the election management body, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), which is constitutionally mandated to oversee the conduct of both voter registration and elections.

Filipinos only need to register once. Even those who registered and voted at the age of 15 for the youth council (SK) elections do not need to reapply in order to vote for national elections when they reach the age of 18, although civil society organisations (CSOs) have reported that this provision has not been consistently adhered to.³ Voting status is, however, deactivated in the case of loss of citizenship, conviction for certain offences or failure to vote in two consecutive elections. To restore voting rights, the citizen must apply for reactivation in accordance with the Voter's Registration Act (1996).

Until recently, voter registration required the physical presence of the applicant at the Office of the Election Officer in their respective locality. The COMELEC Register Anywhere Programme (RAP) has created "one-stop shops" in malls, schools, universities, government offices, churches and other private establishments (for example, corporate offices) where eligible citizens can register, request a change of residence/marital status, reactivate voting status and correct voter information. In addition to new registrants and those transferring voting location, the initiative addresses the needs of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) transitioning to in-country voting, senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs). Citizens can now register at any of these sites, regardless of their current residence.⁴ RAP has effectively facilitated the registration of young first-time voters and

has proven to be particularly useful for groups like students and workers who find themselves away from their permanent residences during the voter registration window.⁵

Applicants, to be eligible, must have resided in the Philippines for a year and in the city or municipality where they register to vote for at least six months before the election. The Philippine diaspora is one of the largest and most widespread in the world, and COMELEC, with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs, conducts out-of-country elections and voter registration in accordance with the 2013 Overseas Voting Act (Republic Act no. 9189, amended by Republic Act no. 10590). Policies are in place to provide special conditions and services for the registration of members of vulnerable groups.⁶ Since persons deprived of liberty maintain voting rights and participate in elections, COMELEC organises special satellite registration activities in prisons and detention centres.⁷

The 1987 Constitution guarantees the fiscal autonomy of COMELEC, as a result of which approved annual appropriations, stipulated in the General Appropriations Act, are automatically released to the commission.⁸ As a government agency, the budget is subject to stringent review and approval by the Development Budget Coordinating Committee on which are represented the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Finance, the National Economic and

3 Based on key informant interviews with representatives from civil society organisations.

4 Alice Sicat, "You can now register anywhere: Your guide to Comelec's nationwide voter registration," Philippine Information Agency, January 23, 2024

5 Ayang Macdonald, "Filipinos can enroll biometrics from any location in next general voter registration," Biometric Update, Nov 28, 2023

6 Vulnerable groups include senior citizens, pregnant women and persons with disabilities. They are given special considerations during the electoral process to ensure ease of participation.

7 Commission on Elections (COMELEC), Rules and regulations on the conduct of the system of continuing registration, Resolution no. 10963, 2024

8 Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos, "DBM: Comelec's 2024 budget to be used for its regular ops," Philippine News Agency, January 17, 2024

Development Authority, the Office of the President and the Central Bank of the Philippines,⁹ as well as by the President and the Cabinet and, ultimately, Congress which holds the “power of the purse.”¹⁰ For the fiscal year 2024, COMELEC was assigned a budget of PHP 40 billion (€651 million),¹¹ the highest allocation received since its establishment in 1940.

Despite the funding provided for electoral processes, there are still challenges and issues related to registration, in particular, double registration, fees for documents and transport costs. In the recent 2023 barangay (village) and Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) elections, COMELEC flagged around 120,000 individuals who were intentionally double-registered¹² and filed charges.

Unintentional double registration, on the other hand, occurs mostly when overseas registrants are unsure whether to register as a new applicant or apply for overseas voting. Although voter registration is free of charge, there are issuance fees for the documents required for identification (for example, birth certificates and passports). Lastly, free transport is not provided to or from voter registration sites.

9 Department of Budget and Management, “About the DBCC,” n.d.

10 Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, “Power of the Purse,” Congress of the Philippines, n.d.

11 Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act, FY 2024 — Commission on Elections, 2023

12 Stephanie Sevillano, “Comelec to file charges vs. intentional double registrants,” Philippine News Agency, June 19, 2023

Transport costs are one of the many barriers to the registration of young voters, especially in rural areas. For example, a young first-time voter from an island in Tawi-Tawi, Mindanao, would have to take a boat from the island to the mainland in order to register at a COMELEC office.

Once the young voter arrives on the mainland, there is a long wait at the Office of the Election Officer. Frustration with those who have friends in high places and get special treatment often leads to commotion and contestation. Agents are flagrantly organising the registration of illiterate indigenous people to vote for a particular candidate. Everyone is standing outside in the open awaiting their turn. But the worst is yet to come, our young voter has not made it to the cut-off point in the queue and is told to come back another day. After another two failed attempts, our voter manages to get registered at the third attempt. As a result of the unclear communication of registration requirements, registrants, like our young voter, have to rely on family members to send photos of missing documents in order not to make another return trip. It costs around PHP 400 (€6) for transport, photocopying of documents, food and mobile phone costs.

The experience is totally different for young urban voters from cities like Manila, Quezon City or even a city in Negros Occidental. While they may choose to register at the local COMELEC office, a process which takes anything from half an hour to several hours, they also have the option of registering at their schools or universities via satellite registration. Not only is processing much faster, but they have numerous registration sites to choose from. All the young urban first-time voter needs to do is to present his school ID, fill out some forms and do the biometrics. Some educational institutions make printed registration forms available around the campus, so students can fill them out beforehand. Transport costs for registration are virtually non-existent as everything can be done at the educational institution.

These scenarios are based on interviews conducted with young voters from these locations.

Case Study



Voter Registration Costs

There are no specific regulatory guidelines on the percentage of funds for voter registration allocated from the overall COMELEC budget. Furthermore, there is no distinct funding earmarked exclusively for voter registration in current or past COMELEC budgets as specified in the General Appropriations Act¹³ (see below). For example, under the Election Administration Program (EMP), there is a line item for a voter education and

registration management sub-programme. Similarly, under the Electoral Enforcement and Adjudication Program (EEAP), costs related to the “development of measures to enhance registration” and the “maintenance, updating and secure keeping of voter registration records” are grouped with other election-related costs. The only item with a clearly specified budget is the Overseas Absentee Voting Continuing Registration.

Current Operating Expenditures				
	Personnel Services	Maintenance & Other Operating Expenses	Capital Outlays	Total
A. Regular Programs				
General Administration and Support	PHP 1,208,668,000 (EUR 19,690,760)	PHP 375,196,000 (EUR 6,112,426)		PHP 1,583,864,000 (EUR 25,803,187)
Operations	PHP 3,152,898,000 (EUR 51,364,775)	PHP 11,427,766,000 (EUR 186,173,049)	PHP 1,000,000 (EUR 16,291)	PHP 14,581,664,000 (EUR 237,554,116)
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM	PHP 3,095,220,000 (EUR 50,425,126)	PHP 11,426,825,000 (EUR 186,157,719)	PHP 1,000,000 (EUR 16,291)	PHP 14,523,045,000 (EUR 236,599,137)
ELECTORAL ENFORCEMENT AND ADJUDICATION PROGRAM	PHP 57,678,000 (EUR 939,649)	PHP 941,000 (EUR 15,330)		PHP 58,619,000 (EUR 954,979)
Total, Regular Programs	PHP 4,361,566,000 (EUR 71,055,536)	PHP 11,802,962,000 (EUR 192,285,476)	PHP 1,000,000 (EUR 16,291)	PHP 16,165,528,000 (EUR 263,357,304)
B. Project(s)				
Locally-Funded Project(s)	PHP 611,430,000 (EUR 9,960,983)	PHP 23,277,607,000 (EUR 379,222,246)	PHP 49,236,000 (EUR 802,117)	PHP 23,938,273,000 (EUR 389,985,347)
Total, Project(s)	PHP 611,430,000 (EUR 9,960,983)	PHP 23,277,607,000 (EUR 379,222,246)	PHP 49,236,000 (EUR 802,117)	PHP 23,938,273,000 (EUR 389,985,347)
TOTAL NEW APPROPRIATIONS	PHP 4,972,996,000 (EUR 81,016,520)	PHP 35,080,569,000 (EUR 571,507,722)	PHP 50,236,000 (EUR 818,409)	PHP 40,103,801,000 (EUR 653,342,652)

Figure 1. Summary of COMELEC's approved budget for fiscal year 2024¹⁴
(Source: General Appropriations Act 2024)



¹³ The General Appropriations Act (GAA) in the Philippines is the annual national budget approved by Congress and signed into law by the President. It outlines the allocation of government funds for various agencies, including COMELEC.

¹⁴ Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act, FY 2024.

The table below (Figure 2) makes clear that there has been no significant increase in the budget earmarked for voter registration-related expenditures over the years. This lack of increase persists despite the consistent growth in the COMELEC budget (with the exception of a 2023 budget cut¹⁵).¹⁶

Furthermore, only a small proportion of the overall budget is allocated to voter registration-related costs: for three fiscal years (2021, 2022 and 2024) out of five, it was below 1%. The fluctuation in fiscal years 2020 and 2023, where the proportion reaches over 3%, is because COMELEC's overall budget is smaller during non-election years.

It is important to recognise that, as mentioned above, these line items are not exclusively devoted to registration activities but are combined with other costs associated with the conduct of the elections.

Year	Overall Budget of COMELEC	Budget for Election-Related Activities ¹⁷	Budget for Voter Registration-Related Activities			Proportion of the Budget for Voter Registration-Related Activities to the Budget for Election-Related Activities
			Costs Under EMP and EEAP ¹⁸	Overseas Absentee Voting Continuing Registration ¹⁹	Total	
2024 ²⁰	PHP 40,103,801,000 (EUR 653,342,652)	PHP 38,519,937,000 (EUR 627,539,464)	PHP 65,386,000 (EUR 1,065,222)	PHP 23,362,000 (EUR 380,597)	PHP 88,748,000 (EUR 1,445,819)	0.23%
2023 ²¹	PHP 5,737,340,000 (EUR 93,468,669)	PHP 2,873,816,000 (EUR 46,818,169)	PHP 64,967,000 (EUR 1,058,396)	PHP 23,362,000 (EUR 380,597)	PHP 88,329,000 (EUR 1,438,993)	3.07%
2022 ²²	PHP 26,697,689,000 (EUR 434,939,793)	PHP 25,154,770,000 (EUR 409,803,652)	PHP 68,470,000 (EUR 1,115,464)	PHP 111,912,000 (EUR 1,823,190)	PHP 180,382,000 (EUR 2,938,655)	0.72%
2021 ²³	PHP 14,594,897,000 (EUR 237,769,699)	PHP 13,074,346,000 (EUR 212,997,962)	PHP 65,711,000 (EUR 1,070,516)	PHP 22,735,000 (EUR 370,382)	PHP 88,446,000 (EUR 1,440,899)	0.68%
2020 ²⁴	PHP 3,838,206,000 (EUR 62,529,327)	PHP 2,452,807,000 (EUR 39,959,390)	PHP 63,714,000 (EUR 1,037,983)	PHP 22,126,000 (EUR 360,461)	PHP 85,840,000 (EUR 1,398,444)	3.50%

Figure 2. Summary of COMELEC's overall budget from fiscal year 2020 to 2024, including the budget for election- and voter registration-related activities (Source: General Appropriations Act 2020-2024)

The figures in the table to the right closely correspond to the actual expenditure figures outlined in a report (see Annex B) provided by COMELEC's Budget Division detailing the expenses incurred for the conduct of the 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Elections (BSKE). The table below shows that spending on voter registration-related activities accounts for less than 1% of total expenditures.

Voter Registration			Proportion to Overall Electoral Costs Amounting to PHP 10,695,580,667.98 (EUR 174,244,806)
Line Item	Amount	Total	
Continuous Registration (Satellite Registration, Supplies)	PHP 73,969,455.57 (EUR 1,205,057)	PHP 90,231,055.57 (EUR 1,469,980)	0.84%
Honoraria of Election Registration Board Chairperson and Members	PHP 14,093,800.00 (EUR 229,606)		
Mall Registration	PHP 1,005,600.00 (EUR 16,382)		
Register Anywhere Project (RAP)	PHP 1,162,200.00 (EUR 18,933)		

Figure 3. Summary of overall expenses for the conduct of the 2023 BSKE, including the voter registration expenditures (Source: COMELEC)

15 It has been reported, however, that the commission received a contingency fund that year amounting to 2.589 billion pesos from the Office of the President.

16 Joel E. Zurbano, "Comelec agrees to cut budget for BSKE," Manila Standard, October 17, 2022

17 Summation of (1) Election Administration Program, (2) Electoral Enforcement and Adjudication Program and (3) relevant line items under Locally-Funded Projects.

18 Summation of (1) Conduct of voter's education and information campaign, print/ radio/ television and social media; (2) Monitoring the implementation of the conduct of election and other political exercises and development of measures to improve the registration and election systems including the dissemination of election results of previous elections and (3) Maintenance, Updating and Safekeeping of Voter Registration records, election statistics, results and records for record services.

19 Excludes the budget allocated by the Department of Foreign Affairs, consistently earmarked at PHP 43,414,000 from Fiscal Year 2020 to 2024.

20 Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act, FY 2024.

21,22 Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act, 2022

23 Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act, FY 2021 — Commission on Elections, 2020

24 Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act, FY 2020 — Commission on Elections, 2020

Beyond the Numbers: 1992 to 2022 National and Local Elections (NLE) Voter Turnout²⁵

Year	Number of Registered Voters	Number of Actual Voters	Voter Turnout
2022	65,831,806	55,431,939	84.20%
2019	61,843,771	46,937,139	75.90%
2016	54,363,844	44,549,848	81.95%
2013	52,014,648	40,214,324	77.31%
2010	50,977,118	38,179,475	74.90%
2007	44,881,129	32,808,937	73.10%
2004	43,522,634	33,510,092	76.99%
2001	36,354,898	27,737,268	76.30%
1998	34,117,056	29,474,309	86.39%
1995	36,415,154	25,736,505	70.68%
1992	32,141,079	24,254,954	75.46%

The table to the left shows a general increase in the number of registered and actual voters from 1992 to 2022. This, together with the high turnout rates, indicates the continuing interest of Filipinos in participating in the electoral process. These figures do not, however, necessarily indicate that the efforts of COMELEC in support of voter participation are sufficient, nor can the commission take the credit for this situation.

For example, COMELEC recorded over 65 million registered voters for the 2022 National and Local Elections (NLE), well over its target of 59 million registered voters, but still well below the voting population projected by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) for that year: 73.3 million. The then COMELEC Commissioner, Marlon Casquejo, admitted that, the total number of registered voters was well below the PSA’s projection – this reality has been accepted as the norm.

A comparison of the 2015 Philippine population with the 2016 registered voters for the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups illustrates the significant gap between the total population and registered voters. As this does not take account of the population growth after 2016, the gap between registered voters and the actual voting population could be even larger.

With COMELEC aiming to register three million new voters for the upcoming 2025 national and local elections³⁰, it is imperative that the commission adopt a more proactive approach and allocate increased resources to enhance its voter registration initiatives. Persistent issues such as limited slots for registration, hard-to-reach registration centres and understaffing have been consistently reported. Yet, despite the recurrence of these challenges, the budget allocated for this pivotal aspect of the electoral process has not increased significantly in recent years.

Age Group	2015 Population ²⁸	2016 Registered Voters ²⁹
20-24	9,396,155	7,983,167
25-29	8,304,461	7,370,037

25 Commission on Elections, “Comparative Statistics on Total Number of Registered Voters, Total No. of Voters Who Actually Voted and Voters’ Turn-Out (%) from 1992 to 2022 National and Local Elections”, 2022

26 Dwight de Leon, “Senate delays Comelec budget over row on voter registration deadline,” Rappler, September 24, 2021

27 Ibid.

28 “Age and Sex Distribution in the Philippine Population,” Philippine Statistics Authority, August 12, 2022,

29 “2016 NLE Statistics,” Commission on Elections, July 12, 2017

30 Sundy Locus, “Comelec targets 3M new voters for 2025 national and local polls,” GMA News Online, January 10, 2024

Barriers to Youth Voter Registration

Youth registration faces systemic barriers, exacerbated by chronic underfunding and geographic disparities. These barriers affect people registering as voters in differing measures. As the vast majority of first-time voters are young people, they affect youth more than any other age cohort. This is reflected in the YouthVote Philippines's (YouthVote PH) report,³¹ which states that the Philippine voter registration process is "inaccessible and inconvenient" and, in some localities, "unsafe, inaccessible, and inconvenient".

A major administrative barrier is the cost of issuing the documents required for registration. This particularly affects young people who are making their first application for identity documents such as birth certificates and passports. It costs PHP 155 (€2) for each copy of an official PSA birth certificate (PHP 365 with courier delivery charges),³² while passport fees range from PHP 950 to PHP 1200 (€15-19).³³ With around 70% of the country's labour force in the informal economy,³⁴ obtaining the required identification documents can be a challenge. While formal employment often requires proper identification as part of the hiring process, the informal sector does not have such requirements. Consequently, a significant proportion of these citizens lack official identification documents, such as government-issued IDs.

An additional challenge is the lack of awareness of the documentary requirements on the part of young people. Many students living in dormitories away from their hometowns are required to show proof of residency at their present address, which is challenging when utility bills and other documents are under the name of the lessor. Another group facing challenges are young registrants holding dual citizenship. The COMELEC Office for Overseas Voting reported instances of reluctance to register due to concerns about the potential impact on citizenship status.

Numerous interlocutors considered the physical conditions of voter registration facilities a disincentive to registration, citing inadequate ventilation and seating arrangements, long queues and overall poor organisation. Prevalent clientelism, known as the palakasan (godfather) system, where individuals with influential backers get privileged treatment, such as jumping the queue, further exacerbates the difficulties of registration. COMELEC interlocutors, however, blame the long queues and overcrowding on the Filipino culture of leaving things to the last minute and relying on deadline extensions.³⁵ Despite the launch of an online appointment system (iRehistro), there are insufficient slots to satisfy demand, resulting in the inability to register.³⁶

Geographic barriers are a significant disincentive for voter registration. Young first-time voters living in isolated or rural areas face challenges related to the location and accessibility of registration centres. Getting to the nearest satellite registration site is a logistical challenge for those who live in far-flung provinces and remote islands, often compounded by the need to return repeatedly to get a place in the queue before the cut-off point or to integrate the necessary documentation. Congestion also results from numerous villages or small territorial units (barangays) being assigned to a single registration site.

The lack of subsidised transport to and from these registration sites constitutes a financial burden for individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Beyond these costs, the long waiting times at registration sites make it necessary to buy food. In some cases, the registration staff provide light snacks for those in line, but these are rarely sufficient. Other hidden costs are associated with missed work days or missed classes at educational institutions. For potential voters, especially those working on "no work, no pay" arrangements, losing a day's pay is too high a price to pay for registration. Students missing classes to register may face academic repercussions, such as missing out on activities, tests and class discussions.

31 Unpublished, mentioned in a key informant interview with YouthVote PH's representative. YouthVote PH is a coalition of Filipino organisations that advocate for the democratic engagement of young people, particularly in the electoral process.

32 "PSA Birth Certificate Online Application and Delivery," Philippine Statistics Authority

33 "Passport Fees," Department of Foreign Affairs – Office of Consular Affairs

34 Emily Chris A. Cabegin, "The Informally Employed in the Philippines: Issues in Job Security of Tenure, Social Security Coverage and Measurement," *Philippine Journal of Labor and Industrial Relations* 39, (2022): 52.

35 Attorney Dindo Maglasang, panel key informant interview, January 18, 2024.

36 Iya Gozum, "Months before deadline, qualified voters encounter registration problems," *Rappler*, June 15, 2021

Young people from indigenous groups, in particular, face literacy and inclusiveness barriers. Certain politicians and groups take advantage of these literacy gaps to exploit the vote of these young people who are accompanied to register in order to “groom” them as voters for specific candidates. Future client-voters are enlisted through the provision of money, transportation, food and rice as incentives to register.

In line with international trends, there is a prevailing scepticism regarding representative democracy and the impact of an individual vote. This socio-cultural barrier leads to disconnection from the democratic process and widespread voter apathy and disillusionment. It also fuels failure to register.

There is also an information barrier. Insufficient and ineffective voter education means that information fails to reach all those eligible to register, leaving some unaware of their voting rights, particularly the right to participate in village and youth council elections (BSKE) from the age of 15.³⁷ There is also a lack of clear information on document validity requirements for proof of residence and identification.

Finally, security concerns in certain regions, such as Mindanao, are significant, if geographically limited, barriers to voter registration. Grave intimidation and the fear of election-related violence as early as the registration phase contribute to an environment of insecurity – a major disincentive to registration.³⁸



³⁷ Based on a consultation with a group of junior high school students, January 9, 2024.

³⁸ Based on a series of interviews with youth registrants from Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi, January 23-26, 2024.

Youth Voter Registration Initiatives

In contrast to other relatively low-income countries, the youth voter turnout is high.³⁹ As illustrated in the table below, the latest community youth council (SK) elections in 2023 recorded a 72.5% voter turnout, surpassing the 65.5% reported in 2018. There has also been an increase in the number of registered voters, which may be partly due to the postponement of two elections (2020 and 2022).⁴⁰ Undoubtedly,

the participation of young Filipinos in this community-level electoral process is a positive factor. In the most recent – arguably crucial – 2022 national elections, 21.6 million or 33% of the total registered voters were young people. During this period, media attention was given to the young people camping out at registration centres to secure the available slots,⁴¹ and there was discussion on the existence and potential impact of a ‘youth vote.’

Year	Number of Registered Voters	Number of Actual Voters	Voter Turnout
2023	23,254,852	16,862,588	72.5%
2018	20,651,771	13,529,267	65.5%

Figure 4. Voter (age 15-30) turnout in the 2018 and 2023 youth council (SK) elections (Source: COMELEC)⁴²

A political communications expert interviewed attributed the strong interest among young people in registering for the 2022 national elections to the clear drawing of “lines,” improved access to information via the Internet and the vigorous campaigns by competing camps to mobilise the youth vote. He further observed the prevailing sense of urgency. On the other hand, the COMELEC spokesperson and director of the Education and Information Department saw the positive trend in turnout for youth council (SK) elections as attributable to a realisation, on the part of Filipinos in general, of the importance of community-level (barangay) officials in the light of their crucial role in aid provision during the pandemic. He also associates this with the initiatives implemented by COMELEC to promote voter registration.

a welcome development, as currently, educational institutions intending to host satellite registration usually have to reach out to local COMELEC offices to convince them to conduct registration.⁴⁴ These educational institutions are also required to conduct baseline studies to demonstrate that a significant number of the student population are, in fact, first-time voters.

In connection with the nationwide roll-out of RAP, the COMELEC chairperson recently announced that the commission will launch a “massive” information campaign on voter registration.⁴⁵ Currently, COMELEC conducts both in-person and online information campaigns, with the latter now utilising new platforms such as TikTok, which have resulted in noticeably higher public engagement, according to the COMELEC spokesperson and director of the Education and Information Department.⁴⁶ He noted, however, that it is not possible to determine the impact of ongoing campaigns as the commission lacks a proper assessment tool.

39 Sustainable Development Goals Help Desk, “Case Study on Youth Issues: Philippines,”

40 Cristina Chi, “Post-BSKE: Comelec eyes more mall voting sites, ‘special registration’ for next elections,” PhilStar, October 30, 2023

41 Anthony Esguerra, “Filipinos Camp Out to Register to Vote in Next Year’s Elections,” Voice of America, November 11, 2021

42 Based on reports received from COMELEC (see Annex C).

43 Alice Sicat, “You can now register anywhere,” Philippine Information Agency, January 23, 2024

44 Jerard Afafe, key informant interview, January 25, 2024.

45 Locus, “Comelec targets 3M new voters,” GMA News Online, January 10, 2024

46 Attorney John Rex Laudiangco, key informant interview, January 22, 2024.

With the evident success of RAP, COMELEC is now gearing up for a nationwide rollout of the initiative: a significant development in voter registration that promises convenience, accessibility, increased voter turnout and strengthened democracy.⁴³ This is

He added that should the department receive additional budget, they plan to procure the services of MediaMatrix, but that the current priority was instead the procurement of equipment and better Internet services to consolidate internal capacity, resulting in longer-term savings.

Although still in its pilot testing stage in select schools in Catanduanes,⁴⁷ COMELEC has begun institutionalising voter education, including registration, in co-operation with the Department of Education. In the revised sample lesson plans released by the education authorities in Catanduanes, voter registration is only briefly mentioned. Specifically, Grade 5 students are expected to be taught how to fill out voter registration forms as part of the English curriculum - a significant step towards introducing education on voter registration at a young age. Full implementation, however, is unlikely in the near future as the Department of Education is currently saddled with more pressing issues, as noted by the COMELEC spokesperson.

Youth-led organisations play an important role, working to overcome barriers to registration and the exercise of voting rights through voter education and campaigns to secure voter registration slots and by providing free transportation to registration centres.⁴⁸ The First-Time Voters Movement, founded by Akbayan Youth (the youth organisation of the democratic socialist political party, Akbayan), the Movement for

the Advancement of Student Power, the Student Council Alliance of the Philippines, and the Alliance of United Youth (Alyansa ng mga Nagkakaisang Kabataan), was the first to raise awareness of discrimination against young people and disenfranchisement.⁴⁹ This movement provides a critical voice on the registration process and the conduct of elections, highlighting shortcomings and calling for extensions to voter registration deadlines when needed.

As with COMELEC activities, the impact of civil society initiatives on youth inclusion has not been properly assessed. An interlocutor from the CSO YouthVote PH commented that, while monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are in place, organisations face significant challenges in evaluating the impact of their initiatives, particularly those with a social media component. This reflects widespread shortcomings in the M&E practices of Filipino CSOs. Typically, CSOs develop M&E frameworks primarily to satisfy donor requirements rather than to address local needs, even though donors do not normally fund M&E development. Additionally, the oversaturation of voter registration and education interventions by CSOs further complicates efforts to assess their impact.⁵⁰

47 Department of Education Region V, "List of Competencies in the Revised Lesson Exemplars Integrated with Voter Education," 2023

48 Based on key informant interviews with representatives from civil society organisations.

49 Jonas Bagas, "First Time Voters: A Case of Continuing Political Disenfranchisement," Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Philippine Office, 2024

50 Leizl Adame, key informant interview, January 5, 2024.



Lessons Learned

Tackling geographic and logistical challenges:

There is an evident interest in voting on the part of young people, but achieving higher participation requires effectively addressing accessibility and convenience issues. Geographic barriers, as shown above, are a significant deterrent for some. In general, those residing outside urban areas face disproportionate costs, including expenses for food, transportation and basic requirements. The conditions at registration centres (overcrowded spaces, long queues, insufficient seating and poor ventilation) discourage registration. For students and young workers, registration is often incompatible with the requirements of their educational institution or employer.

Balancing stakeholder participation and cost sharing:

While stakeholders, including educational institutions and the private sector, express a willingness to partner in voter registration initiatives, challenges arise in sharing the financial burden. Despite their readiness to contribute, concerns about costs, such as venues and food expenses, impede effective co-operation. Restricting satellite registrations to residents of one or a few cities (usually the city in which the partner registration site is situated) poses a challenge, especially when members of the participating institutions come from various locations.

Reactive response to persistent issues in voter registration:

Government measures have characteristically been reactive rather than proactive. Despite the increases in the COMELEC budget in response to increased voter numbers, the allocation for voter registration has remained largely unchanged.

Data deficiencies

A notable gap is the lack of comprehensive data and data analysis. Efforts to improve the system are hampered by the lack of consultative mechanisms. COMELEC's on-going digitalisation is a step forward, but the absence of consistent, efficient and systematic data collection as a basis for informed decision-making remains problematic.

Bolstering trust and safeguarding institutional integrity:

It is crucial not only to build but also to maintain trust in COMELEC and the overall integrity of the electoral process. Recent data breaches⁵¹ and controversies⁵² have impacted the reputation of democratic institutions, including COMELEC, contributing to disillusionment among young people.

51 Ina Reformina and Juhn Etienne Villaruel, "Comelec investigating alleged data breach ahead of #Halalan2022," ABS-CBN News, January 10, 2022

52 Hana Bordey, "Garcia: Comelec can't hold Cha-cha plebiscite in late 2024, 2025," GMA News, January 30, 2024; Beatriz Cruz, "Lawmaker slams budget for 'Cha-cha' to be bigger than gov't services fund," BusinessWorld, January 9, 2024

Recommendations

Legal reforms

- In order to enhance the accessibility and convenience of the voter registration, amendments should be introduced to the Voter's Registration Act of 1996 (Republic Act no. 8189) to allow for online voter registration. By utilising digital platforms, citizens can engage in the registration process with greater ease.
- Section 27 of the Voter's Registration Act of 1996 should be repealed so that voter status is not deactivated after failing to vote in two consecutive elections. This would eliminate counterproductive penalties and remove bureaucratic barriers for citizens.

Procedural improvements

- As a priority, the physical conditions in registration centres should be improved to ensure adequate seating, proper ventilation and efficient queue systems. The modernisation and improvement of facilities are particularly important for vulnerable populations such as PWDs and the elderly. To support registration, office opening hours and days should accommodate a variety of work schedules, including provisions for night-shift workers.
- Procedural correctness should be a priority. Training programmes for personnel should be improved in line with the goal of an efficient and fair registration process. In this regard, stricter policies should be in place to tackle queue-jumping and to root out the prevailing culture of clientelism (the palakasan system).

- The quality and clarity of information should be improved, especially regarding documentary requirements and the availability of registration slots. Transparent communication reduces confusion, instils trust and contributes to a more organised and accessible registration process.

Societal engagement

- A concerted effort should be made to improve civic education and voter education, giving additional emphasis to voter registration. This could involve streamlining information for mass public distribution and greater institutionalisation of voter education within school curricula. Some suggestions from respondents also included embedding educational content in onsite media. Posting physical signage such as tarpaulin posters around communities was also recommended to enhance voter awareness. Informative materials, such as videos and pamphlets, were recommended as were seminars and caravans targeted to specific populations, such as indigenous people. Priority should be given to social media and face-to-face approaches over traditional media in order to maximise cost-effectiveness and efficacy. This was recommended by COMELEC field officers.
- Co-operation between youth groups and coalition-building is recommended in order to streamline registration campaigns and to ensure coherent messaging. Consideration should be given to incentivising voter registration, such as through rewards and entertaining activities. The social dimension can help to motivate citizens to participate in the registration process.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Effective voter registration initiatives require baseline data and improved data management systems to enable the evaluation and analysis of registration systems and processes to ensure informed policy-making. This should be a priority to enable CSOs and academics to develop a better understanding of the voter registration process. M&E systems in both the governmental and civil society sectors should be enhanced.

Digitalisation

- The full digitalisation of the voter registration process and the provision of online registration services are also recommended in order to reduce manpower requirements and to reduce the costs associated with physical premises and paper usage. In this context, it is recommended that data security measures be significantly improved.
- COMELEC should have broader network access through co-operation with pertinent government agencies such as the Department of Information and Communications Technology. This would ensure widespread connectivity, thereby facilitating online registration and enabling COMELEC to reach rural areas through online registration booths.

Annex

ANNEX A – Key Informants and Focus Group Discussion Participants/Interviewees

COMELEC OFFICERS		
Name	Department	Position
Dir. Eden Bolo	Information Technology Department	Assistant Department Head
Atty. Michelle Frances Morales-Paredes	Office for Overseas Voting	Director
Atty. Dindo Maglasang	Election and Barangay Affairs Department	Director
Patrick Cruz	Procurement Management Department	Assistant Department Head
Atty. John Rex Laudiangco	Education and Information Department	Director and COMELEC Spokesperson
Dir. Frances CM Aguindadao-Arabe	Vulnerable Sectors Office	Director

SECTORAL EXPERTS		
Name	Organisation/Affiliation	Position
Leizl Adame	Center for Youth Advocacy and Networking	Executive Director
Jayson Maulit	Namayan Digital	Director of Community Design / Political Communications Expert
Angela Maree Encomienda	YouthVote Philippines	National Youth Convenor
Jerard Afable	Sanggunian ng mga Mag-aaral ng mga Paaralang Loyola ng Ateneo de Manila	Former Externals Chairperson, Member of Satellite Registration Task Force

YOUTH VOTERS	
Name	Place of Residence
Almiera C. Paalan	Tawi-Tawi
Nurwena A. Abdul	Tawi-Tawi

Jezrikhan K. Sulla	Tawi-Tawi
Al-Jabar Jani	Tawi-Tawi
Hero Lucas	Maguindanao
Umayra Usman	Maguindanao
Anna Givera	Manila
Pearl Bornilla	Quezon City
Pauline Lamela	Negros Occidental

BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS 2023
SUMMARY OF EXPENSES (Initial Report)
As of December 31, 2023

POLLWORKERS COMPENSATION	
Pollworkers Compensation (Electoral Boards and Barangay Board of Canvassers)	6,488,635,786.25
ELECTION SUPPLIES, FORMS, EQUIPMENT	
Carbonless Paper	123,080,030.00
Ballot Boxes	110,270,000.00
Mechanical Paper for Official Ballots	82,032,880.00
Indelible Stain Inks	70,063,650.00
Tally sheet	68,150,000.00
Padlocks with Key	26,339,780.48
Printing of PCVL	24,519,480.00
Ballot Secrecy Folder	20,427,446.40
Thumbprint/ Fingerprint taker	19,464,200.96
Other various envelopes	14,806,704.56
Printing of Non-Accountable forms	13,952,527.16
Printing of EDCVL and PCVL	13,863,025.00
Paper seal for use	13,551,866.88
Ballpens	12,156,821.76
Envelopes for the minutes of Voting & Counting of Vote	5,916,486.00
Packaging tape	5,241,799.00
Plastic Security Seals	4,982,304.00
General Instruction for Board of Election (BET)	4,340,832.36
Plastic Acetate	3,715,536.00
Kraft paper	3,493,800.00
Carbon paper for 2022 BSKE	1,801,968.00
Copy paper for 2022 BSKE	1,651,499.52
Corrugated Box for Official Ballots	1,230,180.00
BIR Forms	1,158,385.68
Contious Forms for use in the printing of packing list forms and supplies	638,000.00
Envelop for Isolation Polling Place (IPP) Ballots	616,560.12
CEF 19 & 19-A envelope for key of ballot box	411,040.08
CEF 3 - Poster Indicating Precint Number	342,533.40
PRINTING OF BALLOTS AND FORMS	
Printing of Other Forms	492,400.00
Printing of Election Returns and Accountable forms	321,175,800.00
Printing of Official Ballots	960,633,661.40
ELECTORAL BOARD TRAINING	
Briefing and Training of EB and BBOc	316,411,500.00
SUPPORT AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES	
PNP Support	60,085,000.00
AFP Support	40,000,000.00
PCG Support	10,000,000.00
Partnership Project with DSWD	235,550.00
MOA Signing with AFP	187,000.00
PNP MOA and PCG MOA	14,250.00
OVERTIME OF COMELEC PERSONNEL AND ELECTION CASUALS	
Overtime Payment	1,467,470,367.05
WAGES OF ELECTION CASUALS	
Wages of Election Casuals (Main and Field Offices and Committees)	99,173,061.57
DEPLOYMENT	
Alternative Mode of Deployment Election Equipment, Supplies, Forms	114,550.00
Deployment of Election Equipment, Supplies, Forms	77,902,381.94
AUTOMATED BSKE	
Pilot Testing of Automated BSKE	5,549,525.20
MOBILIZATION AND COORDINATION MEETINGS WITH DESO	
Coordination Meeting DESO	14,846,500.00
Mobilization - Cash Advance for Field Officers	29,505,000.00

BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS 2023
SUMMARY OF EXPENSES (Initial Report)
As of December 31, 2023

BSKE COMMAND CENTER	
Command Center BSKE	2,200,033.50
ELECTION FORUM AND PHOTO EXHIBIT	
BSKE Forum and Photo Exhibit	2,232,565.87
ELECTION POSTERS, CAMPAIGN MATERIALS, ADVERTISEMENTS, ELECTION INFORMATION	
Campaign Materials	542,297.00
Election Posters	3,328,969.32
INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVER PROGRAM	
International Election Observer Program (visitors from other countries)	4,453,050.00
MALL VOTING	
Pilot Test of Mall Voting BSKE	1,689,875.00
MOCK ELECTION	
Mock Election	4,800.00
REGISTRATION	
Continuous Registration (Satellite Registration, Supplies)	73,969,455.57
Honoraria of Election Registration Board (ERB) Chairperson and members	14,093,800.00
Mall Registration	1,005,600.00
Register Anywhere Project (RAP)	1,162,200.00
ONSITE VERIFICATION OF PROJECT OF PRECINCTS	
Onsite Verification of Project of Precincts	3,518,348.17
PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES	
SKBE Briefing	1,981,683.74
SKBE Monitoring of Preparatory Activities	1,152,630.00
Workshop Activity for 2022 BSKE	520,451.00
Pre-Final Week Meeting BSKE	227,428.16
Stakeholders Meeting BSKE	90,200.00
Travelling expenses for various BSKE-related activities	78,493.84
POST ELECTION ASSESSMENT (BSKE)	
Post Election Assessment	1,616,648.96
PUBLICATION OF COMELEC RESOLUTIONS	
Publication in Newspapers	8,528,325.92
RELOCATION OF FIELD OFFICERS	
Relocation of Field Officers	4,601,600.00
COMMITTEE EXPENSES, REPRESENTATION EXPENSES	
Committee on the Ban of Firearms and Security Concerns Revolving Fund	200,000.00
Finance Committee Revolving Fund	182,233.80
Committee on KontraBigay Revolving Fund	1,065,000.00
Printing Committee Petty Cash/Revolving Fund	177,768.90
Project Management Office (PMO) Petty Cash/Revolving Fund	100,000.00
Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) Petty Cash/Revolving Fund	297,103.00
RENTAL OF VOTING CENTERS	
Temporary/Rental of Voting Centers	1,456,044.39
SUBMISSION OF CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY	
Expenses related to the submission of COCs	4,130,615.86
VOTER EDUCATION	
Voters Education	4,943,709.24
VULNERABLE SECTORS	
Emergency Accessible Polling Place (EAPP) Signages	232,657.30
Pantribong Samahan ng Kanlurang Mindoro meeting	181,586.36
OTHER BSKE RELATED EXPENSES	
Public Hearing Postponement of BSKE	4,707,250.00
Reimbursement of BSKE-related expenses	70,766.92
Expenses incurred during payment of poll workers	1,153,143.45
Snacks and Meals during BSKE Operations	150,000.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,627,707.39
OTHER SUPPLIES	
Other supplies for BSKE related activities	6,933,478.55
Supplies for New barracks of PNP-PSPG assigned in COMELEC Office	321,476.00
TOTAL EXPENSES as to date	10,695,580,667.98

ANNEX C - 2023 and 2018 SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN VOTER TURNOUTx



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Records and Statistics Division, ERSD



REGISTERED VOTERS, VOTERS WHO ACTUALLY VOTED AND VOTERS' TURNOUT BY SEX (RVVAV)
October 30, 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections

Partial report as of December 7, 2023

REGION	BARANGAY ELECTIONS							SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS						
	Number of Registered Voters			Voters who Actually Voted			Voters' Turnout	Number of Registered Voters			Voters who Actually Voted			Voters' Turnout
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female		Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	
PHILIPPINES	67,839,852	33,192,216	34,647,636	48,907,510	23,904,106	25,003,404	72.09%	23,254,852	11,491,628	11,763,224	16,862,588	8,327,189	8,535,399	72.51%
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION	7,562,650	3,468,094	4,094,556	4,466,542	2,056,422	2,410,120	59.06%	2,185,101	1,020,038	1,165,063	1,344,146	635,765	708,381	61.51%
CORDILLERA ADM. REGION	1,094,184	553,693	540,491	806,169	412,179	393,990	73.68%	367,888	184,219	183,669	261,633	132,478	129,155	71.12%
REGION I	3,637,593	1,816,394	1,821,199	2,881,250	1,448,302	1,432,948	79.21%	1,277,795	644,106	633,689	1,031,221	521,829	509,392	80.70%
REGION II	2,377,603	1,195,395	1,182,208	1,853,655	940,529	913,126	77.96%	810,440	402,886	407,554	591,306	297,127	294,179	72.96%
REGION III	7,553,905	3,662,113	3,891,792	5,655,657	2,740,324	2,915,323	74.87%	2,458,122	1,210,522	1,247,600	1,885,830	930,534	955,296	76.72%
REGION IV-A	9,544,402	4,526,784	5,017,618	6,468,928	3,073,290	3,395,638	67.78%	3,058,256	1,485,089	1,573,167	2,114,804	1,028,692	1,086,112	69.15%
REGION IV-B	2,055,391	1,025,852	1,029,539	1,545,229	762,617	782,612	75.18%	752,207	374,650	377,557	536,792	264,182	272,610	71.36%
REGION V	4,040,859	1,994,324	2,046,535	3,038,383	1,484,815	1,553,568	75.19%	1,597,216	798,339	798,877	1,181,117	583,533	597,584	73.95%
REGION VI	5,179,765	2,556,480	2,623,285	3,971,818	1,946,761	2,025,057	76.68%	1,764,448	874,287	890,161	1,340,107	658,427	681,680	75.95%
REGION VII	5,415,070	2,654,441	2,760,629	4,182,488	2,009,611	2,172,877	77.24%	1,897,962	939,056	958,906	1,430,832	701,961	728,871	75.39%
REGION VIII	3,265,924	1,653,810	1,612,114	2,440,275	1,224,512	1,215,763	74.72%	1,283,740	653,881	629,859	962,466	483,701	478,765	74.97%
REGION IX	2,377,021	1,192,424	1,184,597	1,757,251	874,635	882,616	73.93%	885,276	443,442	441,834	657,158	325,579	331,579	74.23%
REGION X	3,135,157	1,564,635	1,570,522	2,412,671	1,197,587	1,215,084	76.96%	1,135,832	564,435	571,397	894,962	441,371	453,591	78.79%
REGION XI	3,349,407	1,664,722	1,684,685	2,336,050	1,166,238	1,169,812	69.75%	1,094,561	531,072	563,489	760,527	376,692	383,835	69.48%
REGION XII	2,718,051	1,371,748	1,346,303	1,955,021	984,883	970,138	71.93%	936,908	465,551	471,357	673,768	335,964	337,804	71.91%
CARAGA	1,914,618	975,568	939,050	1,477,408	748,244	729,164	77.16%	724,391	368,598	355,793	567,168	286,549	280,619	78.30%
B A R M M	2,618,252	1,315,739	1,302,513	1,658,715	833,147	825,568	63.35%	1,024,709	531,457	493,252	628,751	322,805	305,946	61.36%



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Records and Statistics Division, ERSD
Intramuros, Manila



NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS, VOTERS WHO ACTUALLY VOTED AND VOTERS' TURNOUT, BY SEX
May 14, 2018 Sangguniang Kabataan Elections

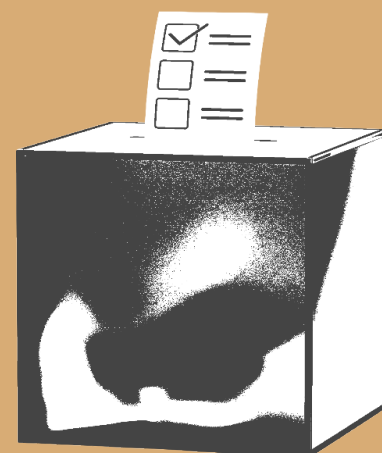
REGION	Number of Established Precincts	Number of Clustered Precincts	Number of SK Registered Voters			Number of SK Voters Who Actually Voted			Voters' Turnout
			Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	
PHILIPPINES	371,908	177,742	20,651,711	10,143,565	10,508,146	13,529,267	6,696,266	6,833,001	65.51%
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION	43,293	19,569	2,054,232	951,907	1,102,325	1,146,509	549,715	596,794	55.81%
CORDILLERA ADM. REGION	6,399	3,243	339,200	169,643	169,557	208,740	103,237	105,503	61.54%
REGION I	20,457	9,885	1,138,259	566,531	571,728	828,505	418,178	410,327	72.79%
REGION II	13,104	6,627	742,545	367,318	375,227	494,482	251,741	242,741	66.59%
REGION III	41,790	19,544	2,144,608	1,049,019	1,095,589	1,480,236	735,332	744,904	69.02%
REGION IV-A	51,914	23,970	2,690,790	1,293,672	1,397,118	1,659,304	802,622	856,682	61.67%
REGION IV-B	11,305	5,317	621,505	308,472	313,033	378,997	187,356	191,641	60.98%
REGION V	21,034	10,750	1,334,602	665,309	669,293	927,184	458,433	468,751	69.47%
REGION VI	28,752	14,106	1,588,501	784,531	803,970	1,096,321	540,746	555,575	69.02%
REGION VII	28,249	13,569	1,732,757	853,562	879,195	1,237,730	608,387	629,343	71.43%
REGION VIII	18,601	9,564	1,173,547	600,398	573,149	836,010	425,113	410,897	71.24%
REGION IX	13,087	6,393	759,934	374,619	385,315	495,033	241,425	253,608	65.14%
REGION X	17,217	8,343	1,015,356	502,203	513,153	723,352	357,528	365,824	71.24%
REGION XI	18,675	8,306	974,919	474,296	500,623	574,086	284,533	289,553	58.89%
REGION XII	15,151	6,956	813,775	403,844	409,931	547,008	277,557	269,451	67.22%
CARAGA	10,291	5,010	658,854	334,663	324,191	451,202	230,254	220,948	68.48%
AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO	12,589	6,590	868,327	443,578	424,749	444,568	224,109	220,459	51.20%

This report is supported by an EU-funded project, WYDE Civic Engagement, led by EPD, the European Partnership for Democracy. The WYDE project is a component of the European Commission's Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative (WYDI). The aim of the project is to strengthen the participation of young people in democratic processes at national, regional and global levels.

This case study was conducted by NAMFREL, bringing in-depth local expertise and insight into the analysis. NAMFREL is a nonpartisan election monitoring organization in the Philippines that has deployed volunteers to observe and report on election processes since 1984. By observing the electoral cycle -- from pre-election to post-election -- NAMFREL provides data-driven policy recommendations to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and Congress. NAMFREL is leveraging its nationwide network of local chapters to observe National and Local Elections (NLE) and the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE).

Beyond its electoral work, NAMFREL promotes good governance by monitoring and ensuring the transparency of government procurement and budgeting, such as in the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the Commission on Elections. NAMFREL ensures the integrity of billions of pesos in public spending on education, healthcare supplies, and election-related materials and paraphernalia. Additionally, NAMFREL trains citizens on election and good governance monitoring through its "Maging Bantay ng Bayan" initiative to empower them to participate in budget and project monitoring.

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