

ChildFund Philippines Supports the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Bill (SB 1979)

ChildFund Philippines fully supports Senate Bill 1979, also known as the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy Act. This bill is crucial for addressing the high rates of adolescent pregnancies in our country and ensuring the health and well-being of our youth.

Adolescent pregnancy is a pressing human rights issue that requires immediate and comprehensive action. The data is clear: According to the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), live births among minors aged 10 to 17 increased by 11% from 50,790 in 2021 to 56,574 in 2022, highlighting the urgent need for effective measures to prevent early pregnancies. Senate Bill 1979 aims to tackle this issue by providing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and access to reproductive health services for adolescents.

We commend the bill's authors for their dedication to this cause. The proposed legislation seeks to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to make informed and responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships. By integrating CSE into the school curriculum, Filipino youths will be empowered to understand human sexuality, informed consent, contraceptive use and the consequences of early pregnancy.

It is important to address the misconceptions and criticisms surrounding this bill. Contrary to some claims, Senate Bill 1979 does not promote inappropriate content or behaviors. Instead, it focuses on age-appropriate and culturally sensitive education that aligns with Filipino values. The bill ensures that adolescents aged 16 to 18 can access essential reproductive health information and services, while younger adolescents aged 10 to 15 years old require parental consent, except if they are already sexually active or are survivors of sexual abuse.

More importantly, this bill is rooted in the fundamental rights of children, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), to which the Philippines is a signatory. It upholds the child's right to health, development, education, and protection from harm and exploitation. Providing access to comprehensive sexuality education and reproductive health services is a critical step toward ensuring these rights, enabling adolescents to make informed decisions and lead healthier lives.

ChildFund Philippines remains committed to working alongside government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to support policies and programs that protect and promote adolescent health and well-being.

We believe that this bill is a vital step towards creating a healthier and more informed generation. By supporting Senate Bill 1979, we are investing in the future of our youth and our nation. We urge our lawmakers to pass this bill and prioritize the well-being of our adolescents.

Together, let us support our country's youth by ensuring they grow up healthy, educated and safe in all stages of their lives.

