



# EVALUATING STATUS, PROSPECTS AND CONCERNS OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF LAGUNA PROVINCIAL POPULATION OFFICE-OUTREACH: INPUTS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*This study evaluated the status, prospects, and concerns of the Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (AHYDP) implemented by the Laguna Provincial Population Office-Outreach, aiming to provide an action plan for program enhancement. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 177 adolescent respondents and 15 program implementers across four districts in Laguna. Stratified random sampling was used for adolescents, while purposive sampling was applied for implementers. Structured survey questionnaires facilitated data gathering, and statistical analyses, including F-tests and p-values, were conducted using specialized software. Findings revealed that program implementers generally perceived the AHYDP as effective, whereas adolescents identified gaps, particularly in accessibility, financial barriers, and youth participation. Significant relationships were found between adolescents' demographic profiles – such as age, marital status, and educational attainment – and their program assessments. For implementers, educational attainment significantly influenced their evaluation of health services. Moreover, a highly significant difference existed between the assessments of implementers and adolescents regarding the program's status and prospects. These results suggest the necessity for continuous improvements in outreach strategies, training programs, and service accessibility to bridge the perception gap and enhance the program's effectiveness in addressing adolescents' evolving needs.*

**KEYWORDS** – Action Plan for Program Enhancement, Adolescent Health, Youth Development, Program Evaluation, Laguna Provincial Population Office

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. In the Philippines, the Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (AHYDP) was established to address the unique needs of young individuals, particularly concerning reproductive health, education, and life skills. The implementation of Republic Act No. 10354, known as the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, underscores the government's commitment to providing age-appropriate reproductive health education to adolescents.

Despite these efforts, Laguna province continues to face challenges related to adolescent health, notably high rates of teenage pregnancies. The Laguna Provincial Population Office-Outreach (PPO-Outreach) has been instrumental in localizing national policies through initiatives like the Adolescent Pregnancy Symposium, aiming to educate both in-school and out-of-school youth.

However, varying responses from adolescents—ranging from awareness to apathy—highlight the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

Understanding the factors influencing adolescent behavior is crucial. Neuroimaging studies have revealed that the adolescent brain undergoes significant structural changes, particularly in areas responsible for decision-making and impulse control, which can impact behavior and risk-taking tendencies [1]. Additionally, socio-economic factors, including education and

rural residency, have been linked to higher incidences of early marriage and adolescent pregnancies [2].

Given these complexities, this study aims to evaluate the status, prospects, and concerns of the AHYDP implemented by the Laguna PPO-Outreach. By assessing the program's reach, effectiveness, and areas for improvement, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for enhancing adolescent health initiatives in the province.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to evaluate the status, prospects, and concerns of the Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (AHYDP) implemented by the Laguna Provincial Population Office-Outreach. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Assess the demographic profiles of adolescent beneficiaries and program implementers.
2. Determine the effectiveness of the AHYDP in addressing key adolescent health concerns, including reproductive health education, life skills development, and access to health services.
3. Identify gaps and challenges in program implementation from the perspectives of both adolescents and implementers.
4. Examine the relationship between demographic factors and perceptions of program effectiveness.
5. Provide recommendations for program enhancement based on the findings in a form of Action Plan.



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to assess the current status and effectiveness of the AHYDP.

### Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method was used to select 177 adolescent participants from various municipalities in Laguna, ensuring representation across different districts. Additionally, purposive sampling was employed to select 15 program implementers based on their involvement and experience with the AHYDP.

### Instrument Development and Validation

A structured questionnaire was developed to gather data on participants' demographic profiles and perceptions of the AHYDP. The instrument underwent content validation by experts in adolescent health and program evaluation. A pilot test was conducted to assess reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through face-to-face surveys administered by trained researchers. Participants were briefed on the study's objectives, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation.

### Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic information and program assessments. Inferential statistics, including F-tests and p-values, were utilized to examine relationships between demographic variables and perceptions of program effectiveness.

### Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards for research involving human participants. Approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained throughout the study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study involved 177 community adolescents and 15 program implementers from four municipalities in Laguna. Among the adolescents, 77% identified as Roman Catholic, 12.7% as Iglesia Ni Cristo, 6.3% as Aglipayan/IFI, 2.1% as Muslim, and 5.3% preferred not to disclose their religion. Grade levels were distributed with 57% in Grade 10, 29.16% in Grade 11, and 27% in Grade 12. Regarding family income, 92.52% reported earning ₱1,000–₱5,000 per month, 66.37% earned ₱5,001–₱10,000, and 19.11% earned above ₱10,000. This indicates economic barriers that may affect access to education and health services.

For program implementers, 9.6% were college graduates, 2.13% had graduate studies, and 4.27% held postgraduate degrees. In terms of training, 80% attended regional training, 13% national, and 7% school-based programs. This suggests a

need for continuous training to enhance program implementation and encourage further professional development.

### Assessment of AHYDP by Implementers

Implementers rated the Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (AHYDP) positively, particularly in areas of sexuality education, life skills development, health services, and the provision of safe environments. Their assessments reflect confidence in the program's design and implementation strategies.

### Assessment of AHYDP by Community Adolescents

Community adolescents provided moderate evaluations of the AHYDP's effectiveness. Concerns were raised about program accessibility, financial barriers, and limited youth participation. These perceptions suggest gaps between program offerings and adolescent needs.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Perception Differences:** Implementers viewed the AHYDP as effective, while adolescents identified gaps, particularly in accessibility and youth participation.
- Future Prospects Assessment:** Discrepancies were noted between implementers and adolescents regarding the program's future prospects, especially in addressing adolescent needs, reducing pregnancy rates, enhancing mental health awareness, and fostering youth participation.
- Demographic Influences:** Among implementers, only educational attainment significantly influenced their assessment of health services. In contrast, adolescents' age, marital status, and educational attainment significantly affected their program assessments.
- Perception Disparities:** Significant differences exist between implementers' and adolescents' assessments of the program's effectiveness, indicating a need for program adjustments to better align with adolescents' needs and expectations.

In light of the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Inclusive Program Implementation:** Encourage diversity among program implementers by including younger, male, and LGBTQ+ facilitators to better connect with a broader adolescent demographic.
- Faith-Sensitive Outreach:** Develop faith-based approaches and partnerships with religious institutions to enhance trust and expand program outreach, ensuring inclusivity and respect for diverse beliefs.
- Grade-Level Tailored Interventions:** Customize program content to address the specific needs of students in Grades 10 to 12, focusing on academic stress, career planning, mental health, and reproductive health.
- Socioeconomic Support Mechanisms:** Introduce initiatives such as scholarships, transportation



subsidies, and financial literacy education to mitigate economic barriers affecting adolescent participation.

5. **Continuous Capacity-Building:** Provide regular and accessible training opportunities for implementers, including national and international programs, to enhance program delivery and effectiveness.
6. **Adolescent-Centered Evaluations:** Implement participatory evaluation methods that involve adolescents in assessing and redesigning program content, ensuring their voices are integral to program development.
7. **Enhanced Access and Participation:** Identify and address barriers to adolescent participation, particularly for marginalized groups, by creating more welcoming and supportive program environments.
8. **Demographic-Specific Strategies:** Conduct further research to understand how demographic factors influence adolescents' program perceptions, enabling the development of targeted interventions.
9. **Strategic Planning for Future Prospects:** Utilize youth feedback to inform strategic planning, ensuring the AHYDP evolves to effectively address emerging adolescent issues and aspirations.

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