A preliminary key trends analysis by 2030

**Key observations**

1. Steady economic growth in the Philippines (15%) has not translated into poverty and stunting reduction.
2. Despite best public health policies, there has been no significant progress in the annual rate of stunting reduction.
3. The phenomenon is unlikely to decline by 2030, especially among the most economically vulnerable communities.

**Statistics**

- **9th**: The Philippines is 9th among countries with the highest number of stunted children.
- **3.9%**: Global VHA target for U.S. children (under 5, 2015), and below the Philippines' national target which is not set to meet by 2025.
- **33.4%**: Stunted children in Asia (2015), and in the poorest quintile (47.2%).

**A Snapshot**

- **Prevalence of under-5 stunting in the Philippines shows progress in reduction over time. On the contrary, there has been a 0.1% increase since 2013.**

Yet, other trends and development indicators for the country have been improving (e.g. years of schooling, GN per capita).

- Despite being one of the fastest growing economies in South-east Asia, the Philippines lag behind in child growth in the region in its fight against stunting.

**What are the obstacles to stunting reduction in the Philippines?**

**The 6 underlying determinants of chronic malnutrition**

1. Access to safe water
2. Access to improved sanitation
3. Female secondary school enrollment
4. Gender equity
5. Consume access to food
6. Share of dietary energy supply derived from non-starchy food

**Trends by 2030**

- **Urbanization of poverty**: 1 in 5 Filipinos live in Metro Manila.
- **Urban, informal settlements will continue growing faster than regularization**.
- **Approximately 72 million people, of which 4 million live in slums.**
- **There is increasing pressure on access to services, infrastructure, and healthcare.**

**Decreasing public investment in education**

- Secondary school enrollment overall remains low in the country.
- Public expenditure in education is only 2.3% of GDP in 2017.

- **Teenage pregnancies have doubled between 2005 and 2013.**
- The female infant mortality rate is increasing.
- Over 90% of older women are female.

- **Changing non-covariance patterns impact child care and learning practices.**

**A dietary shift**

- **High and high-sugar foods consumption increases.**
- Buying ready-to-eat foods tend to replace cooking practices.
- The power of the processed food industry, particularly baby food and milk companies, remains high in the Philippines.

- **Unhealthy behaviors are likely to keep spreading (demonstrating the quality of local foods, especially for pregnant women and under-5).**

To break the cycle of chronic malnutrition, we will need to better understand:

1. The impact and trends of changing food practices on chronic malnutrition.
2. The potential costs and benefits of the adoption of a nutrition-sensitive approach to the education system.
3. The relationship between reproductive health and stunting prevention.
4. The role of media, policy, and social movements in the future fight against hunger and chronic malnutrition.

**Conclusion**

- The Philippines is likely to significantly reduce the outlook as key factors perpetuating the cycle of chronic malnutrition remain unaddressed and could worsen by 2030.

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**Photo**: ACF-Philippines, S. Brgu.