

Increasing out of school youth

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THE number of children not attending school is increasing, according to a lawmaker who called on government to do something to reverse this disturbing trend. At least 1.4 million Filipino children have become out of school youth in the last nine years, hiking the number of unschooled youth at 6.2 million, a lawmaker said on Saturday. Rep. Theresa Bonoan-David of Manila made the disclosure as she filed House Resolution 2511 urging the House committee on basic education and culture to take action to stop the number of out-of-school-youths from climbing further. David said that in 2011, the National Statistics Office reported that about 6.24 million of the estimated 39 million Filipinos aged six to 24 did not attend school. The 2011 figure is much higher than that 4.8 million children reported to have stayed out of schools in the 2002 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS). The NSO said that 28.9 percent of the out-of-school youth did not pursue their studies because of the high cost of education while 27.5 percent stopped for lack of interest. "The state recognizes the youth as key agents of socio-economic development and technological innovation in the country and as such, should provide for mechanisms which would make them avail of a decent education, which would eventually make them indispensable contributors to national growth and progress," David said. She said that the government should do more to help children stay in school, especially those coming from poor families. "With the tough competition for jobs even among college graduates, the door to a decent job will seem closed to them forever if no one lifts a finger," David said.