More than half of Filipinos will be middle class or better off by 2031

Southeast Asia crossed the halfway mark in 2025 and the Philippines is slowly catching up, but most new entrants remain one shock away from slipping back.

MANILA, PHILIPPINES, November 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- By 2031, more Filipinos will be members of the global middle class or above than below it, according to new World Data Lab estimates presented today at the ASEAN Inclusive Growth Summit in Manila, hosted by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council Philippines.

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>
> *Wolfgang Fengler*

Today, 43% of Filipinos are in the global middle class or above. That share is projected to reach 58% by 2036.

Southeast Asia as a whole crossed that line in 2025, and the Philippines is now catching up.

"The Philippines is on its way to crossing a line that changes how the country lives, works and spends," said Wolfgang Fengler, CEO of World Data Lab. "The trendline is clear, and young people are driving it. Across Southeast Asia, Gen Z and Millennials already make up half of the consumer class."

Many of the gains are fragile. Most of the new middle class sits just above the global middle-class threshold. Health is the most common reason Filipino adults borrow. And while 72% are online, only 19% pay by card or phone in a store.

The next phase of growth depends on turning access into security: everyday digital payments, savings that are easy to reach, and protection against health shocks.

"A good life need not wait for affluence," said Fengler. "Millions of Filipinos have only just entered the middle class, and a single hospital bill can undo that. Protecting these gains is now as important as creating them."

Learn more about the Summit and sign up for exclusive access to sessions at: https://www.inclusivegrowthevents.com/event/asean-2026/

Notes to editors

Definitions. World Data Lab defines the middle class as people spending $13 to $130 a day per

person, in 2021 purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars. The consumer class is everyone spending more than $13 a day: the middle class and the rich together. Middle-class and consumer-class figures cover the full population of all ages, not only adults. Population estimates use the Wittgenstein Centre (IIASA) projections, scenario SSP2.

Financial inclusion figures refer to adults aged 15 and over and are World Data Lab estimates for 2026, built on the World Bank's Global Findex data.

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