

# Process Evaluation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA No. 10931):

## *Status and Prospects for Improved Implementation*

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Philippine Institute for Development Studies  
*Surian sa mga Pag-aaral Pangkaunlaran ng Pilipinas*

# Outline

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- I. Background
- II. Methodology
- III. Highlights of Findings
- IV. Summary and Recommendations

# I. Background

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# Study Objectives

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1. Collect insights on the objectives of the policy and its intended outcomes based on program documents and perception of implementers and beneficiaries;
2. Document the actual implementation of the policy, including variations in delivery, facilitating factors and challenges;
3. Investigate the beneficiary targeting and coverage of the policy using available administrative data;
4. Examine the resource inputs, and procedural and organizational adjustments for the implementation of the policy; and
5. Generate recommendations to improve the policy's implementation.

# Components of the Assessment

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Assessment of Program Theory



Assessment of Service Delivery and Utilization

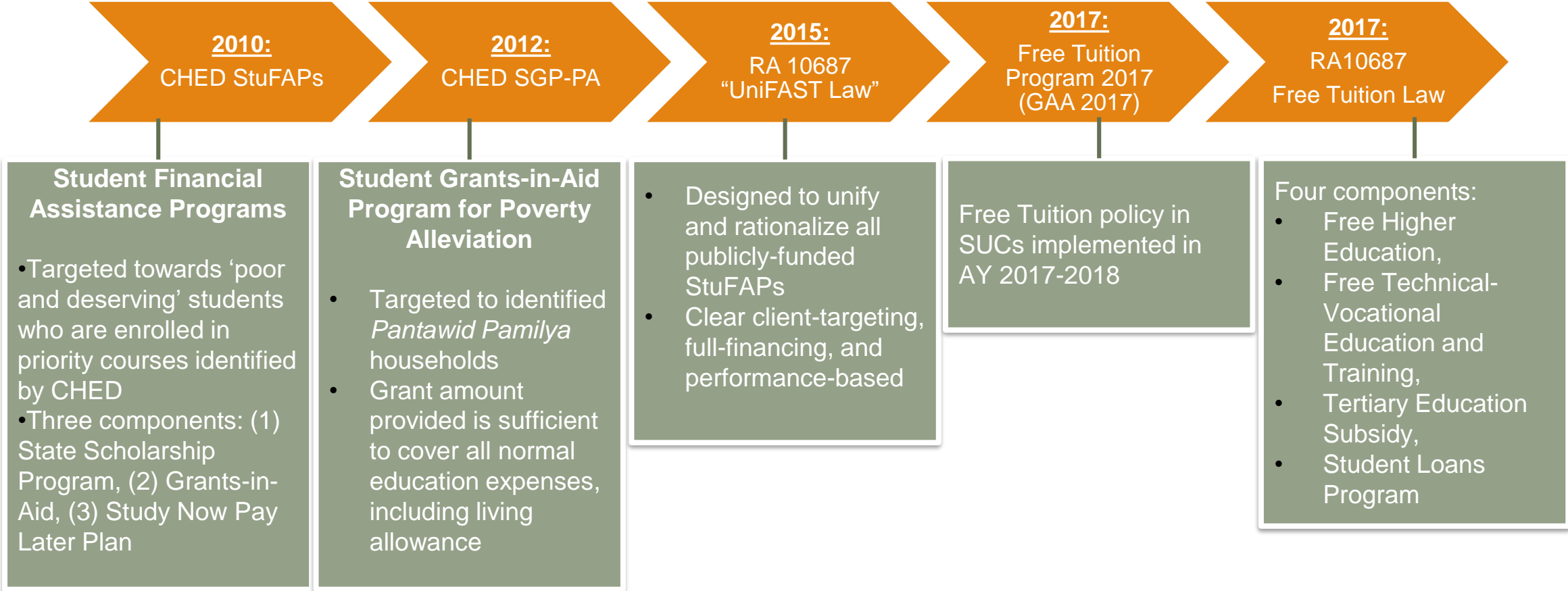


Assessment of Program Organization

# Policy Background

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# Timeline of initiatives on StuFAPs



# Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931)

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## Objectives

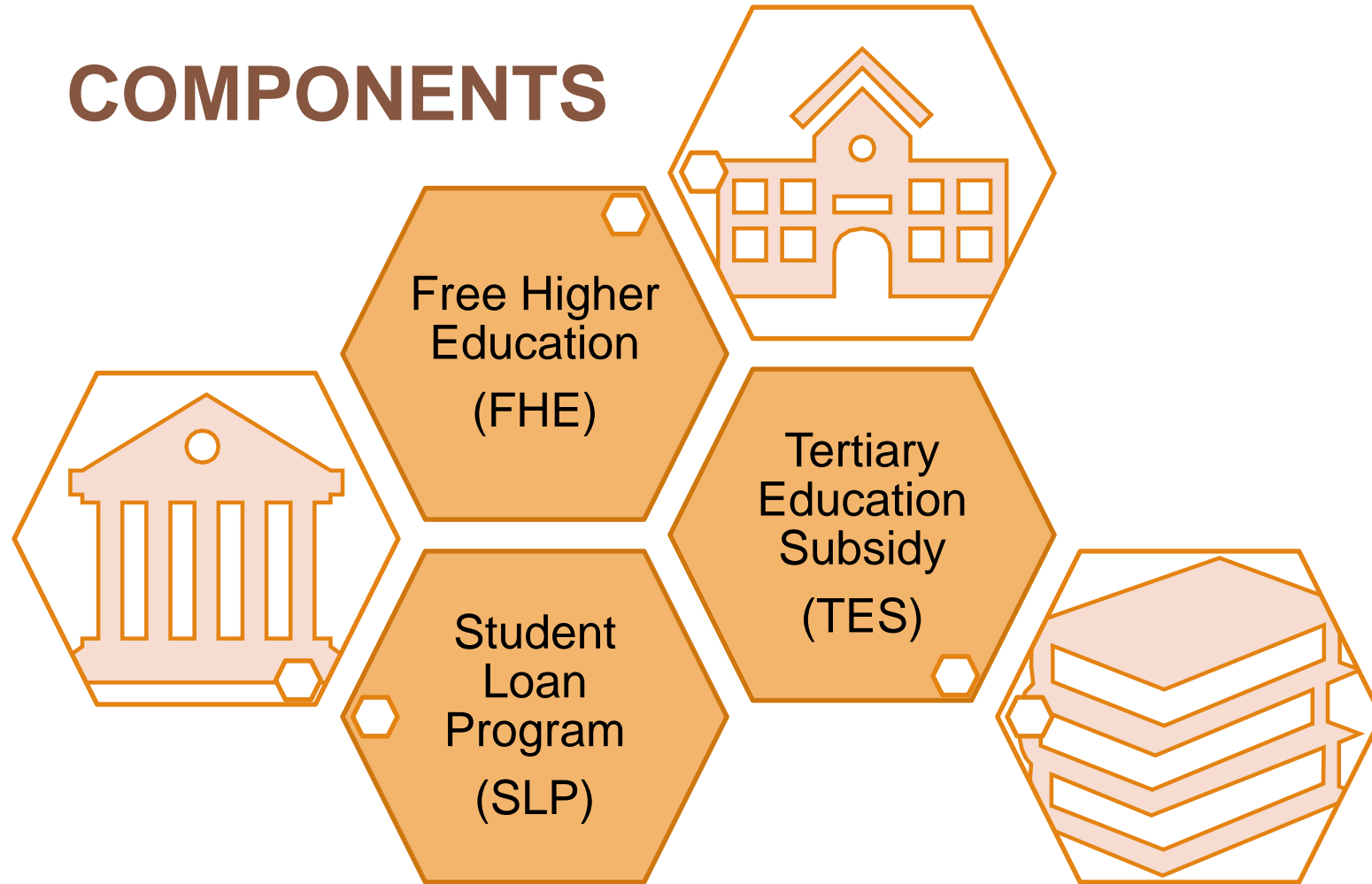
- 1) Provide adequate funding and such other mechanisms to **increase the participation rate among all socioeconomic classes** in tertiary education;
- 2) Provide all Filipinos with **equal opportunity** to quality tertiary education in both the private and public educational institutions;
- 3) Give **priority to students who are academically able and who come from poor families**;
- 4) Ensure the **optimized utilization of government resources** in education;
- 5) Provide **adequate guidance and incentives** in channeling young Filipinos in their career choices and towards the proper development and utilization of human resources; and
- 6) Recognize the **complementary roles of public and private institutions** in tertiary educational system.



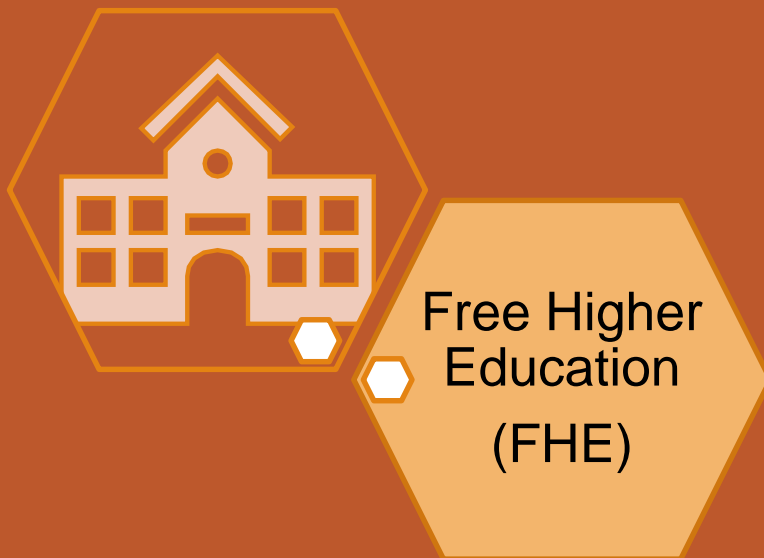
# Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931)

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## COMPONENTS



# Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931)



## Free Tuition and Miscellaneous Fees for:


### SUCs and LUCs

- All Filipino students who are either currently enrolled, or shall enroll in courses in pursuance of a bachelor's degree, certificate degree, or any comparable undergraduate degree

### State-Run TVIs

- All Filipino students who are currently enrolled, or shall enroll in any post-secondary TVET leading to non-degree certificate or diploma programs offered by any state-run TVI under the TESDA

# Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931)



Tertiary  
Education  
Subsidy  
(TES)

## Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES)

TES-1

1. **Tuition and other school fees** in private HEIs, and private or LGU-operated TVIs

TES-2

2. All allowance for **books, supplies transportation and miscellaneous personal expenses;**
3. An allowance for **room and board** costs incurred by the student;

TES-3

3. **For a student with a disability**, an allowance for expenses related to the student's disability
4. **For a student in a program requiring professional license or certification**, the one (1)-time cost of obtaining the first professional credentials or qualifications

# Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931)



Student  
Loan  
Program  
(SLP)

## Student Loan Program (SLP)

- This program component **provides short-term and long-term loans** for students for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- The loan may also be availed for **review expenses** for licensure examinations administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)

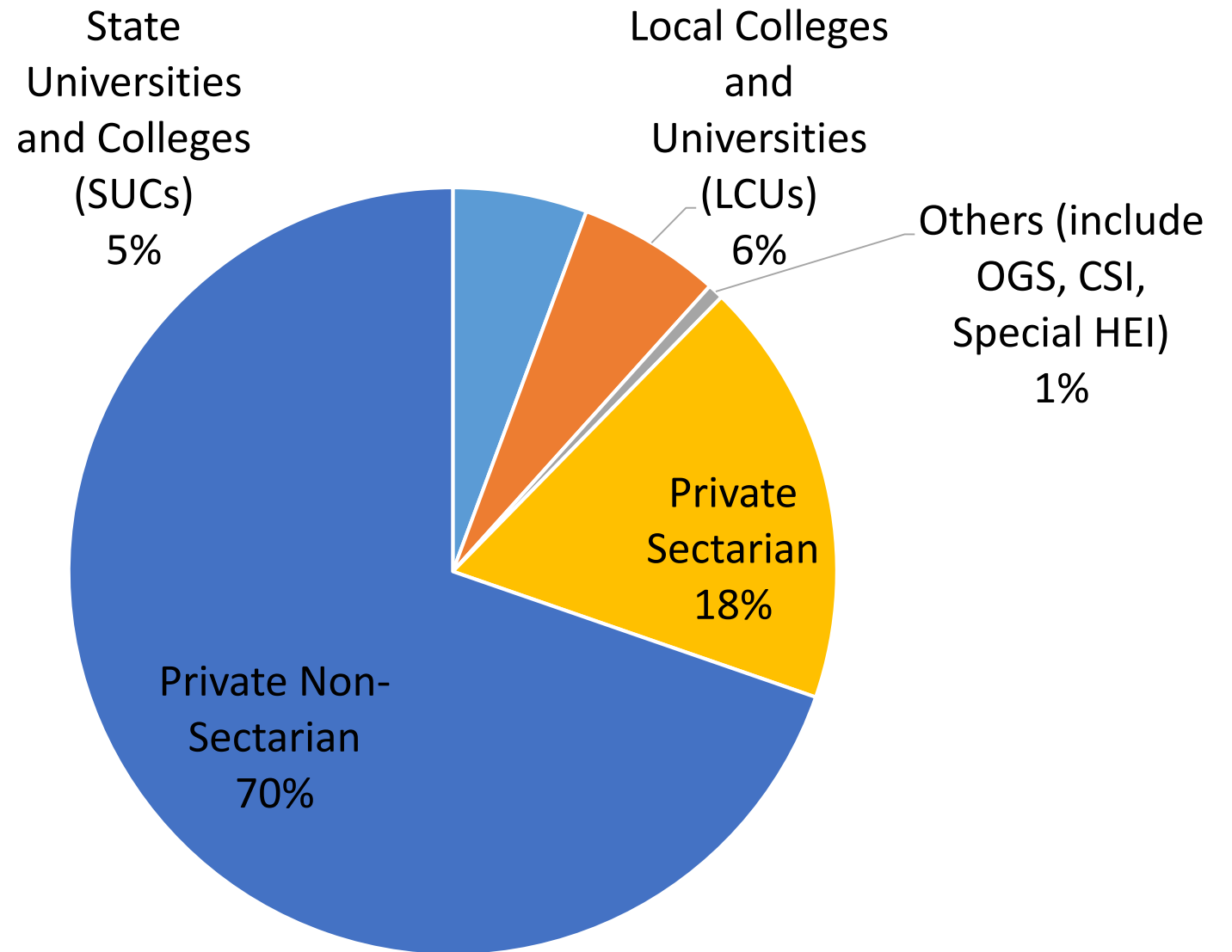
# Profile of the Philippine Higher Education System

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# Distribution of HEIs, 2018-19

In terms of number of HEIs

- 88% private
- 5% SUCs
  - Excluding satellite campuses
- 6% LUCs
- 1% Other public

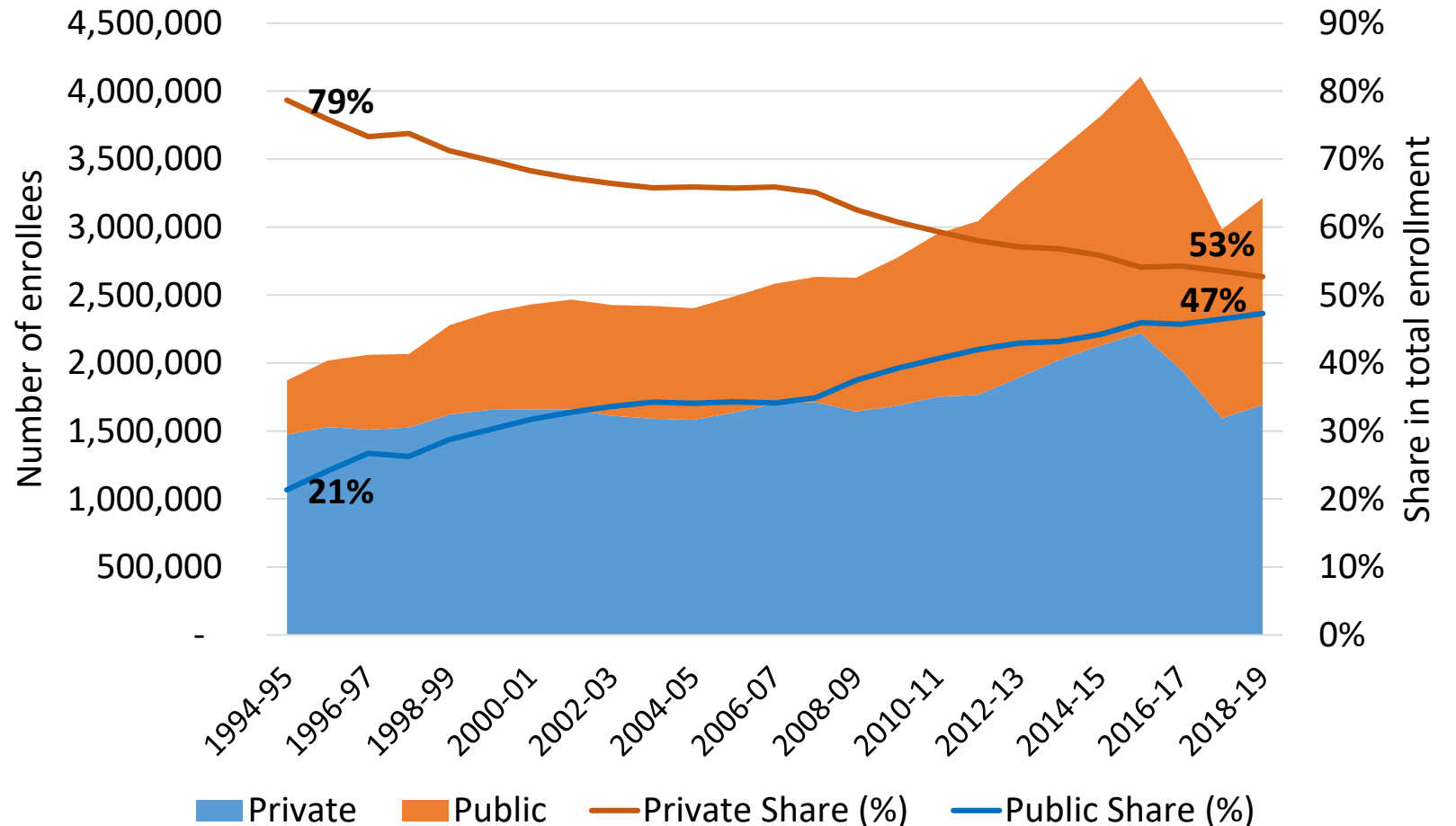


# Enrollment trends, 1994-2018 (CHED)

Share of private: declining from 79% to 53% between AY1994-85 to AY 2018-19

Share of public: increasing from 21% to 47% between AY1994-85 to AY 2018-19

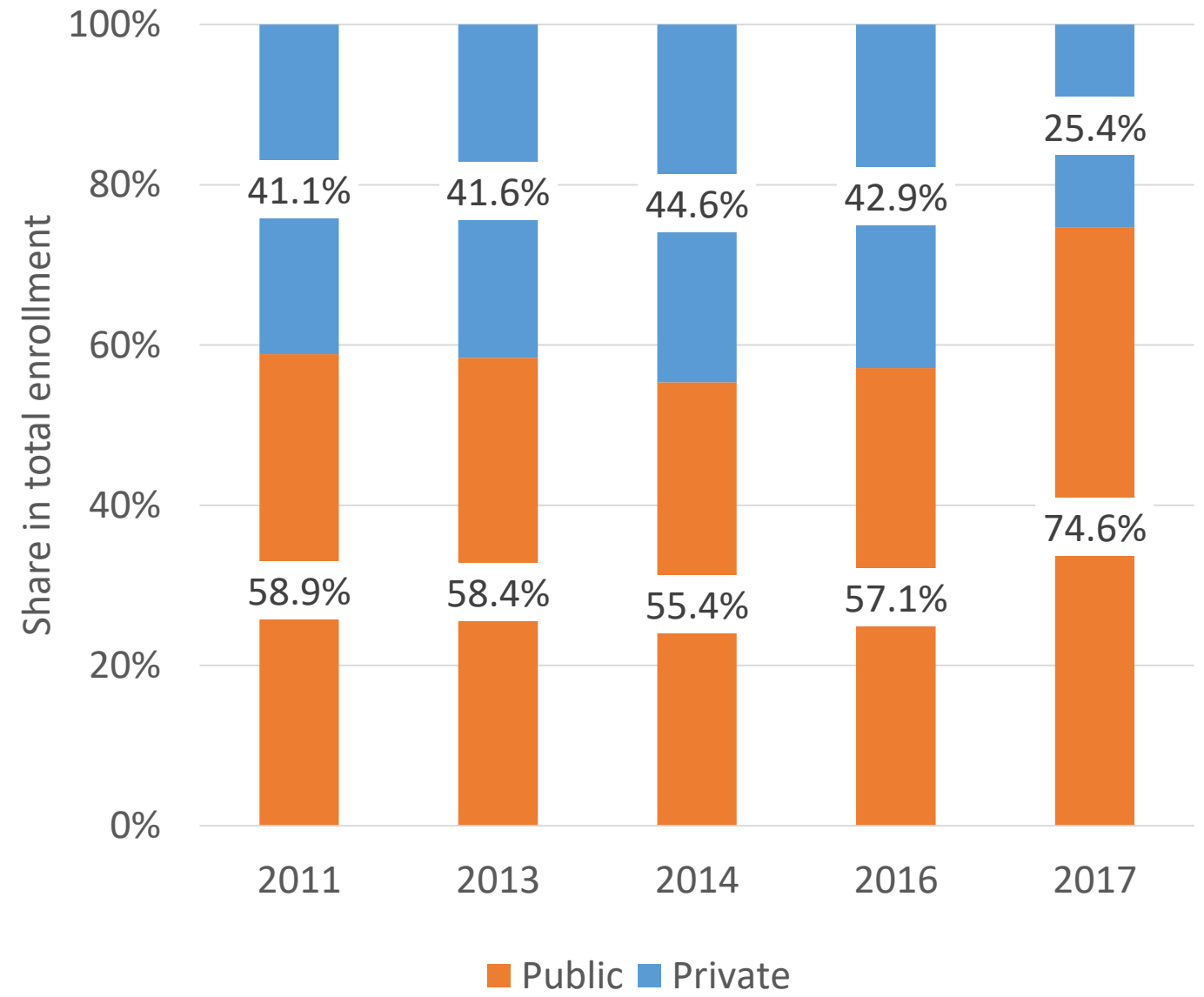
Share of private higher than public



Source of basic data: CHED

# Distribution of first year enrollment, 2011-2017 (APIS)

- Share of private declining
- Share of public HEIs consistently higher
- Increased even more by 2017



Source of basic data: APIS



## Number of StuFAP grantees and share to total HE enrollment, AY 2007 to AY 2016

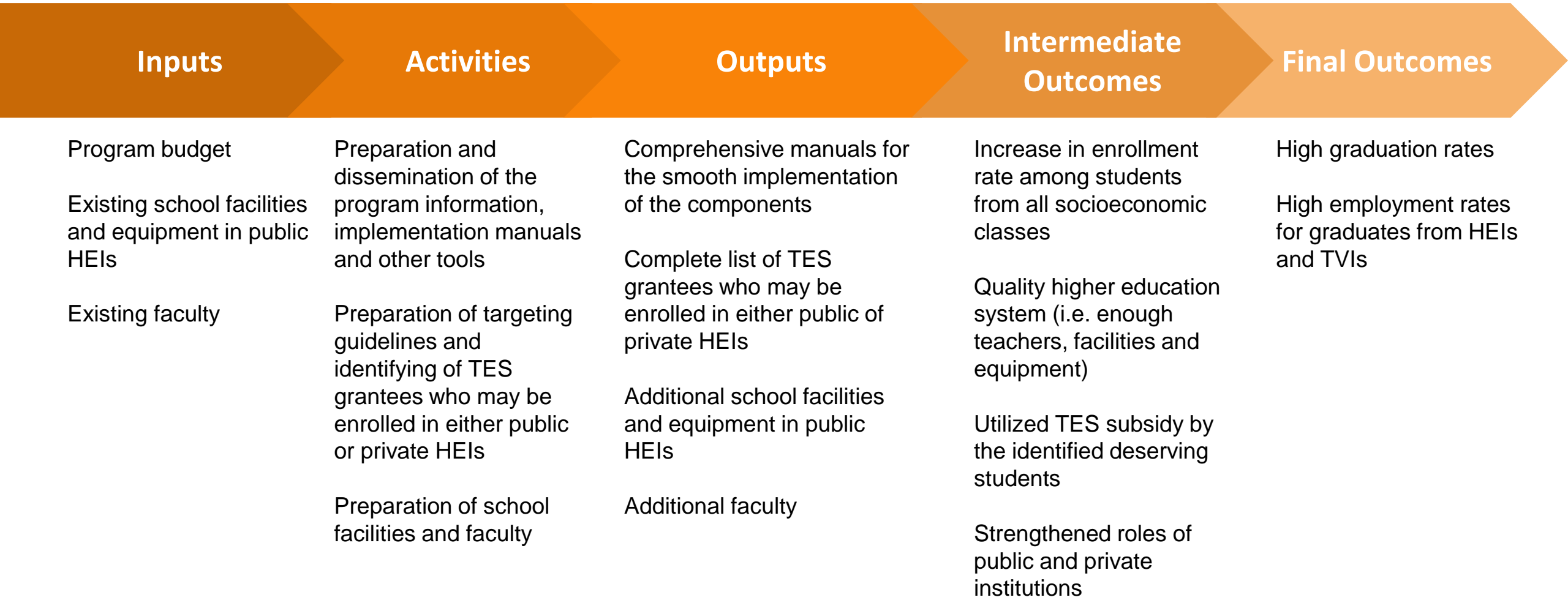
Prior to the enactment of the RA 10931, only a very low proportion of higher education students benefit from StuFAPs (3% on the average)

Academic Year	Total Enrollment	No. of StuFAP Beneficiaries	Percentage of total enrollment
<b>2007-08</b>	2,632,935	71,542	3%
<b>2008-09</b>	2,627,798	144,735	6%
<b>2009-10</b>	2,774,368	57,566	2%
<b>2010-11</b>	2,951,195	58,449	2%
<b>2011-12</b>	3,044,218	63,346	2%
<b>2012-13</b>	3,317,265	53,792	2%
<b>2013-14</b>	3,563,396	58,155	2%
<b>2014-15</b>	3,811,726	391,817	10%
<b>2015-16</b>	4,104,841	164,475	4%
<b>2016-17</b>	3,589,484	166,204	5%

# II. Methodology

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# Theory of Change



# Data Collection Method

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- ❑ **Desk review** to check on studies and literature on the implementation of the Free Tuition policy, among others;
- ❑ **Key-informant interviews** with relevant stakeholders from HEIs, associations, and regulators within Metro Manila, and;
- ❑ **Collection of administrative data** from pertinent agencies to complement the findings of the study.
- ❑ **Online information-gathering activity** among different HEIs across the country;

# Profile of Respondents

- Respondents were selected from universities that were able to submit enrollment data to the study team.
- Schools were identified based on noteworthy changes in university enrollment in AY 2018-2019 relative to pre-SHS program years (i.e. AY 2015-2016, or earlier).

## List of KII Respondents

Type of organization	Number of respondents
HEIs	13
University association	4
Other key stakeholders	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

## Number of KII Respondents from HEIs, by type of HEI and island group

Type of School	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Respondents by type
Private HEI	4	2	1	7
SUC	3	-	1	4
LUC	2	-	-	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>

# Results

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Process Evaluation of the Implementation of RA No. 10931

# Program Logic and Plausibility

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## Understanding of the Objectives of the Law

**There is a clear understanding of the overall objective of the law which is to provide greater access to quality tertiary education.**

Besides this, respondents also mentioned the quality of education, and complementarity between public and private HEIs and TVIs as objectives of the law.

## Are the objectives realistic and achievable?

**Respondents generally believe that the objective of the law to increase access is achievable and realistic.**

- This is dependent, however, on factors such as budget, targeting, and the provision of other support.

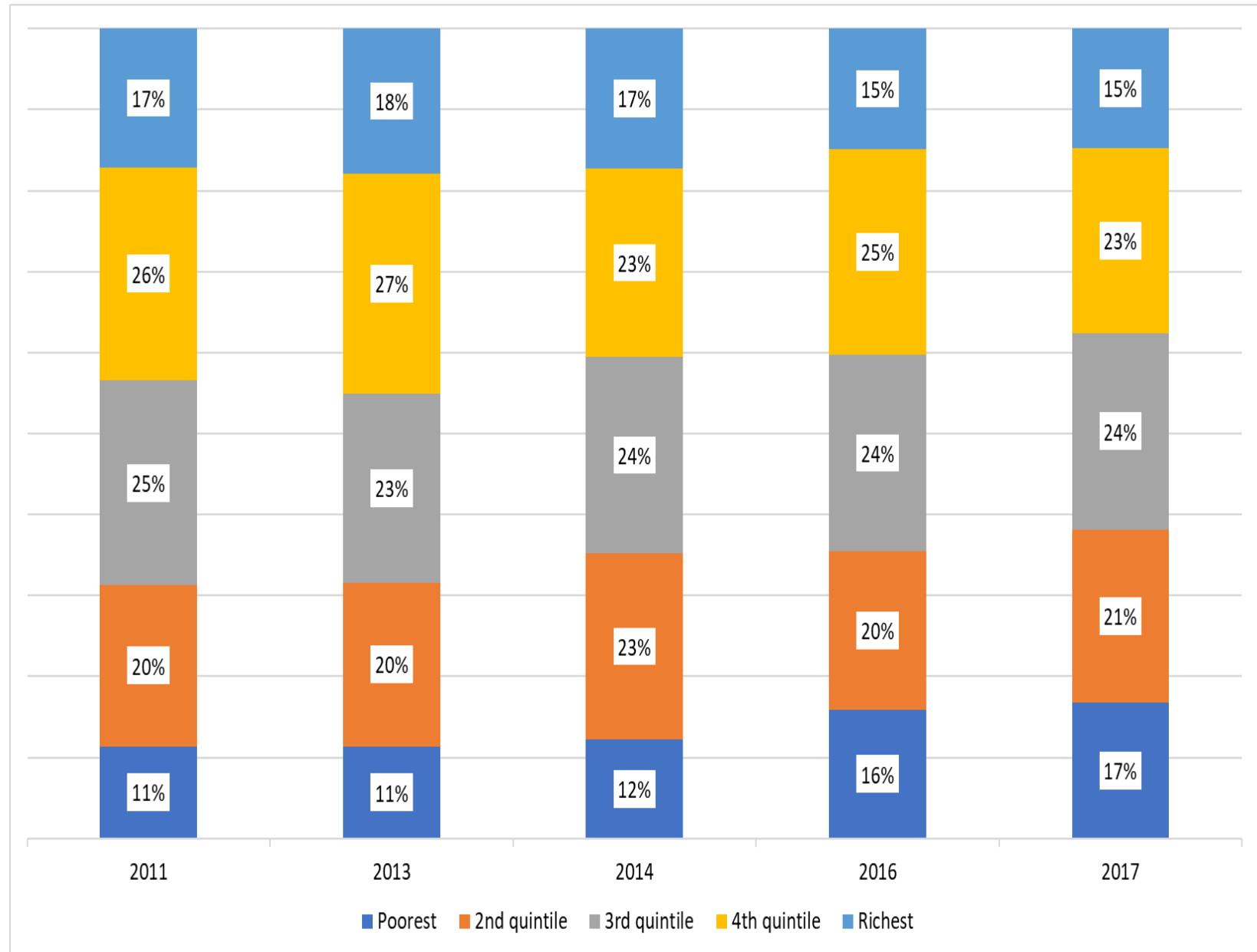
Others noted that students **from lower income classes may be at a disadvantage**, since they need to pass competitive examinations to benefit from the tuition subsidy in public HEIs.

# Are the objectives realistic and achievable?

## The issue of “equity”

Figure 1. Share of PUBLIC Enrollment by Income Quintile, 2011-2017

- 2nd income quintile income households represented well
- Bottom quintile is not
- Both: 31% in 2011, 38% in 2017



Source of basic data: APIS data set (various years)



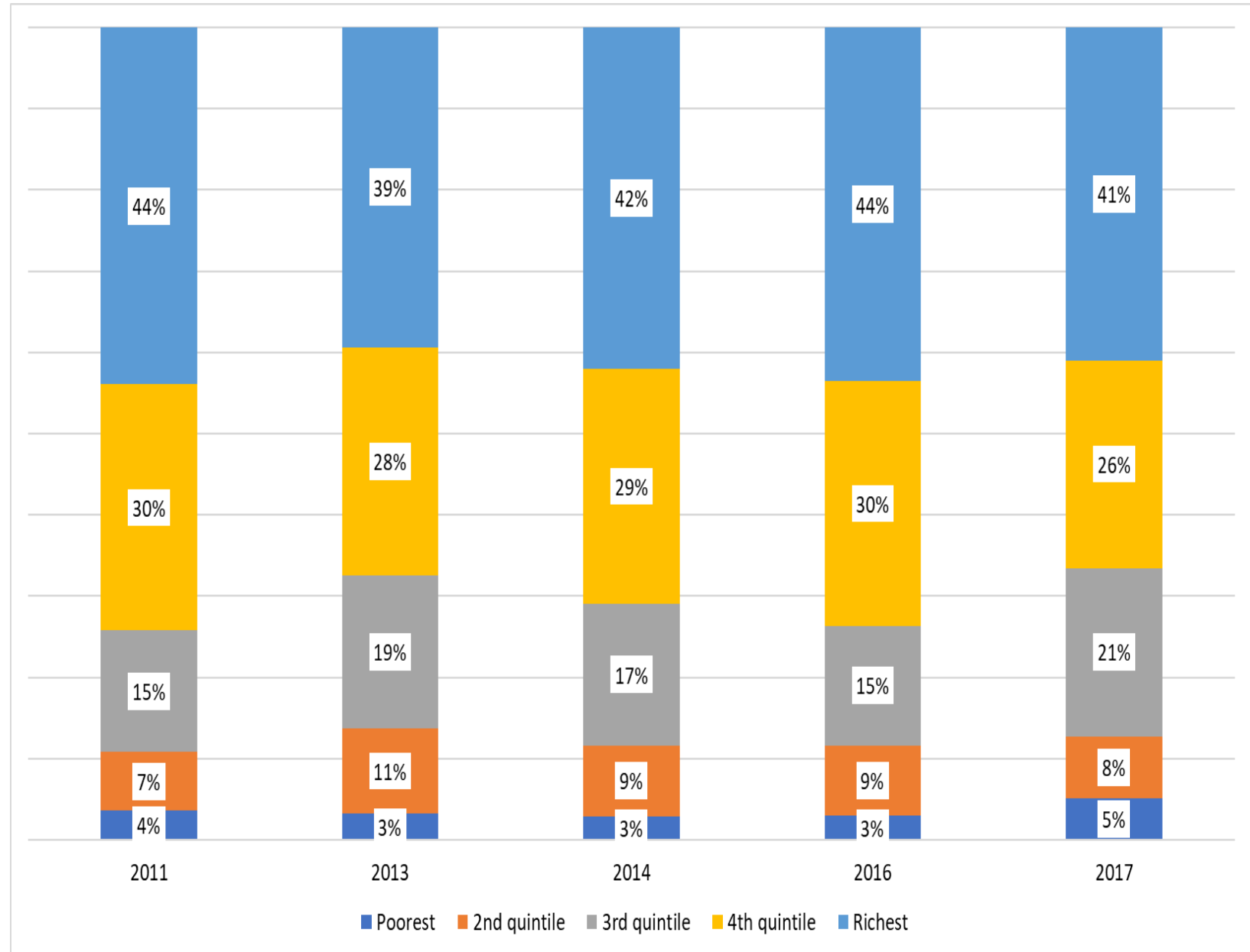
# Are the objectives realistic and achievable?

## The issue of “equity”

Figure 2. Share of PRIVATE Enrollment by Income Quintile, 2011-2017

- poorest and 2nd quintile income households remain **significantly smaller**

(11% in 2011, 13% in 2017)



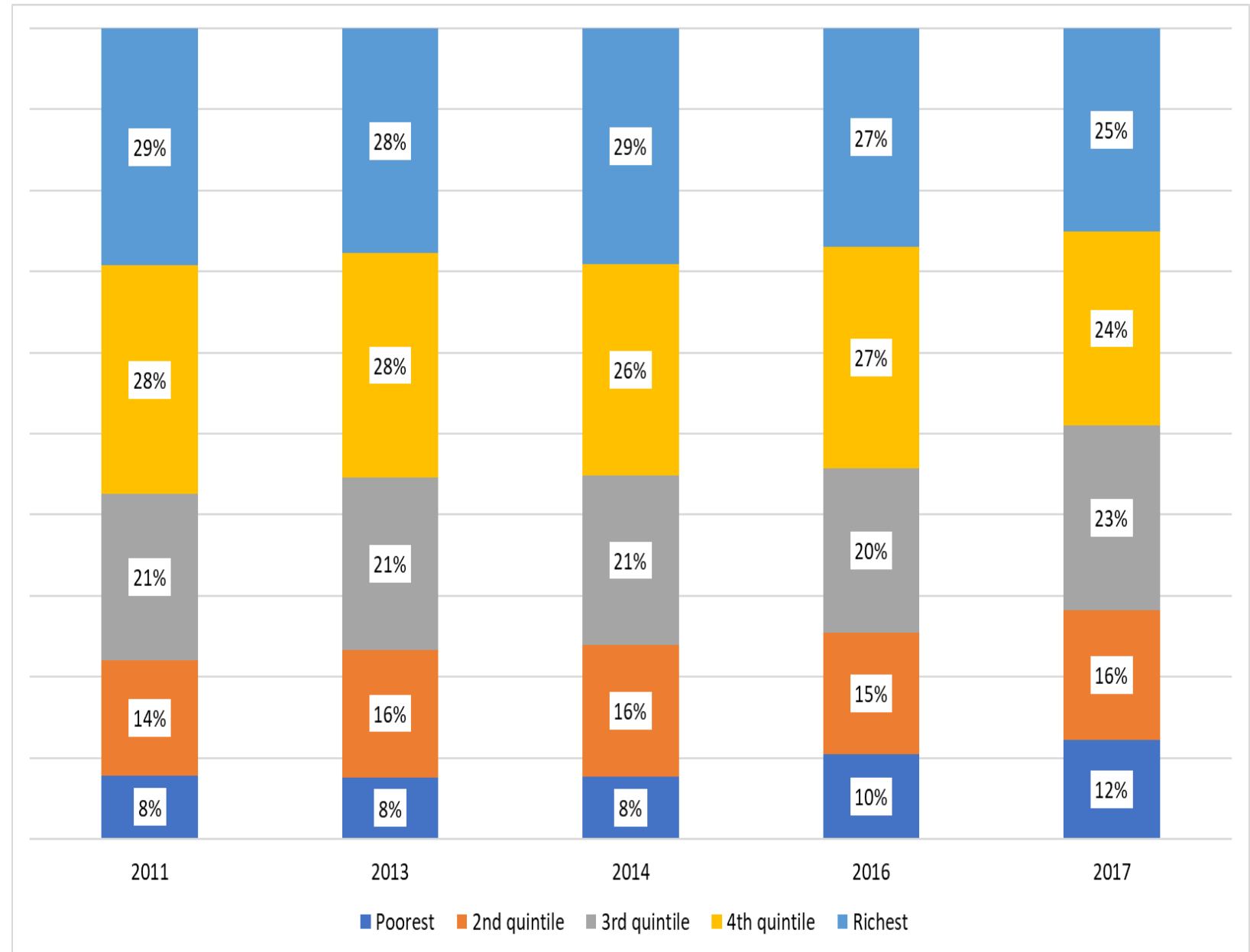
Source of basic data: APIS data set (various years)

*Are the objectives realistic and achievable?*

## The issue of “equity”

Figure 3. Share of Total (Public+Private) Enrollment by Income Quintile, 2011-2017

- there has been a meager change in the socio-economic mix of students enrolled in HEIs



Source of basic data: APIS data set (various years)

# Program Logic and Plausibility

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## *Are the objectives realistic and achievable?*

**Some respondents were concerned whether the law would be able to achieve its objective of maintaining and improving the quality of education.**

There is a question on the government's capacity to ensure that the public HEIs conform with CHED's standards, especially with the expected influx of students to these institutions.

The **amount of budget to operationalize** the four components of the law is perceived as a critical input in achieving the law's intended outcomes.

- A good balance on the budget allotted for each component (i.e. FHE, TES, SLP) is important.
- Available slots under the TES is **dependent on the budget**, and **not on the actual demand** for it.

# Program Logic and Plausibility

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## *Better Approaches to Achieve the Objectives*

**Some respondents suggested that there may be better ways to achieve the law's objectives, these were to:**

1. Improve and invest in public basic education to increase the chances of low-income household students of getting into college, or finishing high school at the very least;
2. Encourage those who can pay for their tuition and fees in SUCs and LUCs to voluntarily opt out of the program, or consider amending the law to exclude those who are economically qualified to pay for their tuition and fees;
3. Decentralize the assessment of potential beneficiaries of the TES to schools;
4. Realign some funds from FHE to other components such as the TES and SLP;
5. Earmark substantial funds for the development of research programs in universities

# Service Delivery and Utilization

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## Insights on the Guidelines

**The release of the guidelines were delayed, and some were not very clear or incomplete making the implementation process confusing for some stakeholders.**

- ❑ Majority of the respondents, both from public and private HEIs, noted that most of the guidelines were released on a tight schedule where deadlines for the documentary compliances need to be met right away
- ❑ Some HEIs also experienced difficulties in the billing and reimbursement process because of changes in the documentary requirements.
- ❑ Ability to comply with the requirements depend on the HEIs initial systems and resources (e.g. existing database or information systems).

**All respondents also acknowledged that these issues and challenges in implementation are all part of the birthing pains of the policy.**

# Service Delivery and Utilization

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## *Insights on the Guidelines*

**Problems in the reimbursement of miscellaneous fees due to issues of interpretation.**

Some schools had to engage with talks with the UNiFAST to request for the reimbursement of some of the fees that were not included in the law nor in the IRR.

**All respondents also acknowledged that issues and challenges in implementation are all part of the birthing pains of the policy.**

# Service Delivery and Utilization

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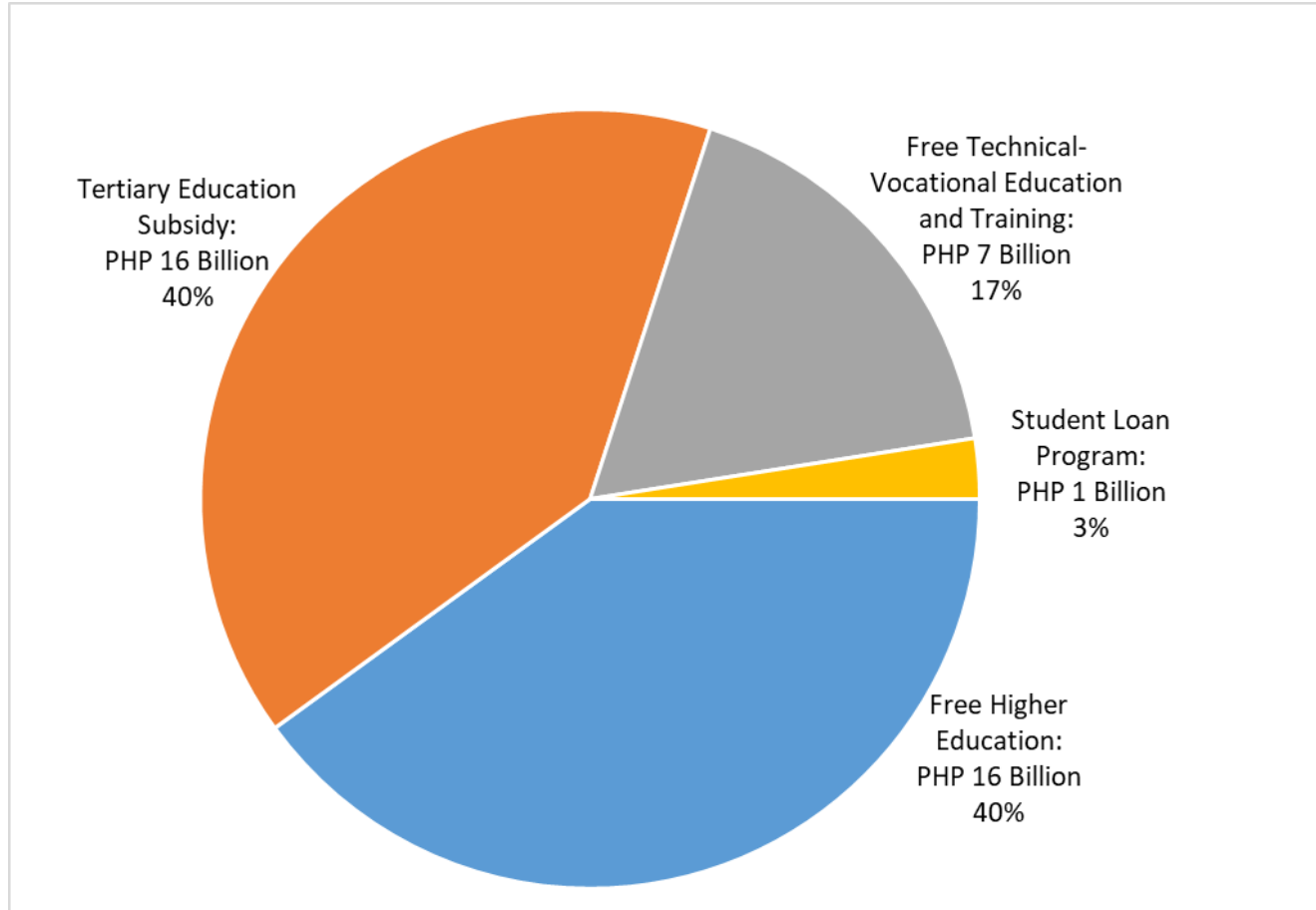
## *Insights on the Guidelines*

**UniFAST noted that although they were able to convene resources and solicit assistance by forming technical groups, there was a lack of technical capacity and manpower when the program began.**

UniFAST was assisted by the regional staff of CHED and initiated the request for plantilla posts to be able to run separately from CHED.

# Service Delivery and Utilization

## Budget for the Implementation of RA No. 10931, AY 2018-2019





### Status of FHE implementation, as of December 2019

- ❑ From the total budget of PHP16 billion of the Free Higher Education component, PHP 14.9 billion has been disbursed as of December 3, 2019.
- ❑ The excess budget of PHP1.2 billion will be allotted to mid-year or “Summer” semester billings of the public HEIs.

#### Disbursements for the FHE for AY2018-2019, as of December 3, 2019

HEI Type	No. of Beneficiaries	Tuition and other school fees (in PHP)
SUCs	1,075,024	13.5 billion
LUCs	109,833	1.4 billion
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,184,857</b>	<b>14.9 billion</b>

# Service Delivery and Utilization

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## Selection of Beneficiaries

**Both the UniFAST, and HEIs experienced challenges during the call for applications for TES.**

HEIs reported experiencing technical glitches during their submission of their applications through the TES portal. Encoding errors were also cited by both HEIs and UniFAST as a potential reason for the exclusion of students from the list of grantees.

**There were also issues regarding Listahanan mentioned by the implementing agency, as well as by some HEIs.**

The UniFAST reported delays in accessing the Listahanan data from DSWD due to their office's lack of the required infrastructure to accommodate the data. There are also misconceptions among some HEIs regarding the Listahanan and its reliability, with some assuming this is equivalent to the 4Ps list.

## Service Delivery and Utilization

# Status of TES implementation, as of January and December 2019

TES Beneficiaries	Update as of January 2019		Update as of December 2019	
	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount in PHP million	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount in PHP million
<b>ESGPPA Grantees</b>	13,804	552.2	13,809	568.9
<b>Studying in Private HEIs without SUCs and LUCs</b>	70,819	4,249.1	70,864	4,379.4
<b>Listahanan 2.0</b>	148,296	8,897.8	147,611	7,075.0
<b>Additional Grantees from the Listahanan 2.0*</b>			49,071	2,300.5
<b><u>UNFILLED SLOTS</u> DSWD 4Ps Beneficiaries not in Listahanan 2.0</b>			22,711	1,169.6
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	232,919	13,699.1	304,066	15,493.4
<b>TES 3A (PWD)</b>	43	1.2	183	5.5
<b>TES 3B (Graduating in Board Courses)</b>	13,734	137.3	50,104	501.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		13,837.7		15,999.9

Source: Yadao-Sison (2019). "UniFAST Updates: Free Tuition 2017 and RA 10931 Implementation", 28 January 2019.

# Service Delivery and Utilization

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## Billing and Reimbursement

### **Issues on where the funds should be lodged.**

Although respondents did not want to undergo the cumbersome billing process, some HEIs prefer it since this give them flexibility in terms of deciding where to spend the funds, since this is recorded as income.

## Stakeholder Satisfaction

### **HEI's satisfaction with the implementation is mixed**

- ❑ While some stated they were satisfied with the program, private HEIs mentioned that the program does not adequately provide the complementarity which is mentioned in the law.
- ❑ Others stated dissatisfaction with the implementation of the program, particularly the billing process as well as selection of beneficiaries.

**One school reported that their students are thankful for the financial assistance provided since it will help them finish their studies.**

# Program Organization

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## Adjustments in the System

**Many HEIs did not require major additional organizational support yet in relation to the implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act.**

Only one HEI mentioned having to reconfigure its system to manage the requirements under the law.

**Both public and private HEIs mentioned that they will be maintaining the quality of the education they provide.**

- ❑ For private HEIs, this means maintaining admission standards despite low enrollment.
- ❑ For public HEIs, this means adjusting to higher demand. UniFAST also mentioned they will be monitoring that the law does not result in the creation of too many satellite campuses

## Stakeholder Consultations and Orientations

**HEI associations such as the PACU and COCOPEA were heavily consulted during the crafting of the law.**

## Monitoring of Outcomes

**No dedicated monitoring system has been established for the outcomes of the law.**

- ❑ UniFAST stated that monitoring is limited to budget utilization reports and random checks for the TES program.
- ❑ HEIs only conduct their usual monitoring of graduates and preparation of reporting requirements for accreditation.

# Effects on Enrollment

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## **Some of the public HEIs reported a higher number of applicants and enrollees.**

Despite the surge in applications, most public HEIs reported that they are still strictly enforcing their admission and retention policies. One HEI, however, experienced a surge in enrollment since it accommodated as many students as it could, exceeding the school's carrying capacity.

## **Private HEIs noted negative impact on their enrollment and are concerned regarding potential negative impact on their operations in the future.**

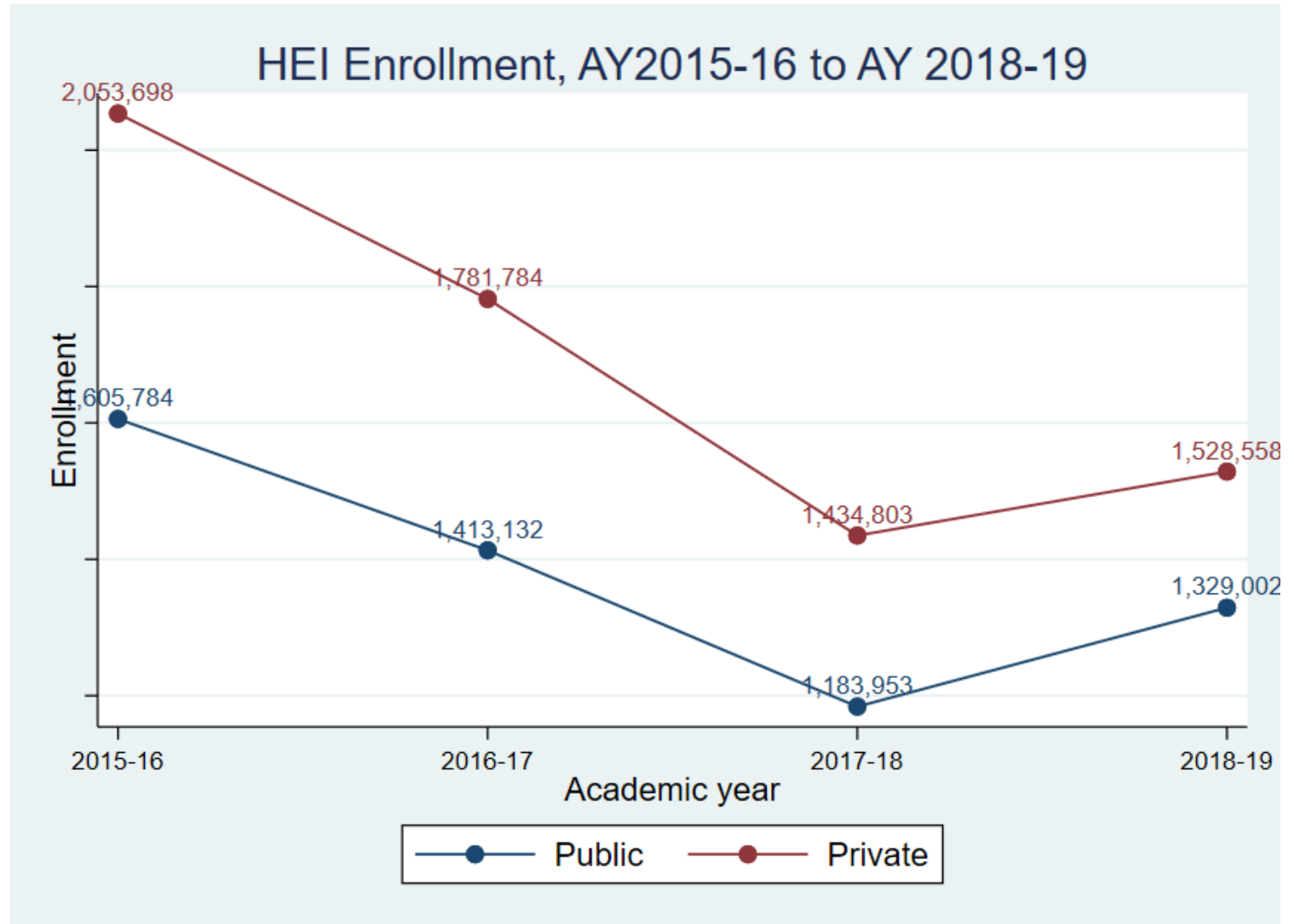
Besides lower enrollment, HEIs are also concerned regarding the retention of their teachers, as well as the quality of their future students, given the strong incentive for students to go to public HEIs.

## **Other respondents were skeptical of the possible shift in enrollment.**

These respondents were doubtful that the policy would make a large and sudden impact on students' school preferences.

# Total enrollment in higher education, 2015-2018 (CHED)

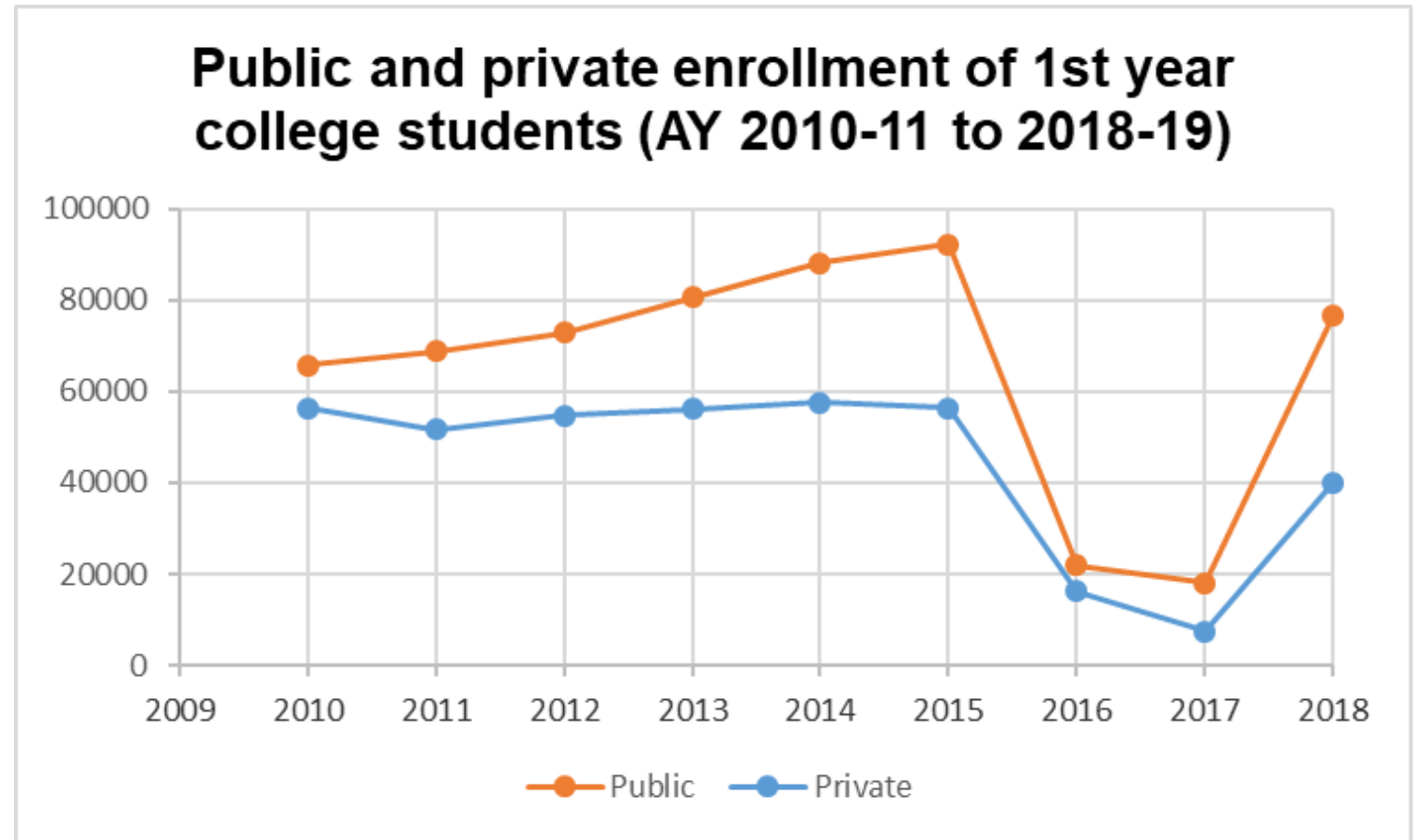
- Total HEI enrollment declined because of SHS implementation and recovered by AY 2018-19
- Public HEIs recovered better than private: AY 2018-19 enrollment is 83% and 74% of AY2015-16 enrollment, respectively



Source of basic data: OPKRM, CHED

# Effects on Enrollment (PIDS Online Survey)

- Total HEI enrollment declined in the years coinciding with the SHS implementation and recovered by AY 2018-19



Notes: n=59 schools; SHS implementation started in 2016

Source: Enrollment data submitted by schools



# Summary and Recommendations

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# Summary

## *Program Theory*

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### **Respondents generally displayed a good understanding of the objectives of the law.**

Often cited was the objective of providing universal access to quality education, as well as the prioritization of underprivileged students for the programs under the law.

### **Although the program objectives are well-understood, there is a mixed opinion of whether these objectives are realistic and achievable.**

Some respondents raise concerns regarding the design of the law and IRR, the implementation of the program components under the law, and the adequacy of resources to maintain these programs.

# Summary

## *Service Delivery and Utilization*

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**The main issue that emerged regarding service delivery and utilization was the lack of timely and clear guidelines.**

Stemming from this main issue were challenges in processing of billing requirements, which then resulted in delays in reimbursement.

**However, respondents generally described these challenges as “birthing pains” of the program.**

Often acknowledged was the tremendous task that UniFAST had to face in the implementation of the law.

# Summary

## *Program Organization*

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**As the main implementer of the program, UniFAST cited lack of personnel, both in number and technical capacity, as their biggest challenge in the first year of implementation.**

The office was able to overcome this through support provided by CHED and technical working groups formed with key stakeholders and education specialists.

**As the front-line implementers, most HEIs reported that they did not require major adjustments to process the documentary requirements required by the UniFAST.**

This, however, was not true for all schools. Some schools reported adjusting their enrollment and registration systems to comply with UniFAST's requirements. This usually depended on school size and their existing information system capacities.

# Summary

## *Shifts in Enrollment*

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### **Total HEI enrollment declined in the years coinciding with the SHS implementation and began recovery in AY 2018-19**

In terms of freshman enrollment, Public HEIs were able to recover better than private HEIs in AY 2018-2019.

### **There are indications of a widening gap in the share of public and private HEI enrollment; in favor, of public HEIs**

Although inconclusive, this may potentially confirm the suspicion of the surge of public HEI enrollment due to FHE.

# Recommendations

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**1. CHED should strengthen the monitoring of HEIs, as well as the quality standards it advocates.**

The UniFAST should strictly implement the specific rules and conditions stated in RA 10931 and its IRR regarding HEI quality, and regularly review school quality and performance to ensure the optimal utilization of funds allocated to the programs under the law.

**2. Leverage the subsidy to promote quality of HEIs**

Government stakeholders, including CHED-UniFAST should explore ways to incentivize, as well as support, investments in school quality.

**3. Look for ways to promote compliance with quality standards.**

Specifically, this refers to institutional or program-based accreditation for LUCs and private HEIs, and application for COPCs for SUCs.

# Recommendations

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**4. SUCs and LUCs should be monitored to ensure that they do not exceed their respective carrying capacities.**

Most HEIs reported that their admission policies remain unchanged and they are still implementing quotas per program, however, UniFAST should continue to monitor this in the subsequent years as there are clear incentives in enrolling more students in SUCs and LUCs.

**5. The CHED-UniFAST needs to expand organizational support.**

Besides a national secretariat, there should be additional staff delegated for each region that can cater to the needs and concerns of stakeholders in the different parts of the country.

**6. Consultations and orientation meetings should maximize use of high technology**

# Recommendations

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## **7. Program design should be reassessed to provide greater equity in access to tertiary education.**

Both implementers and legislators should remain open and flexible to facilitating redesign and improvements to the program to better democratize access to tertiary education, particularly, for the poor.

## **8. Strengthen the targeting mechanisms of the TES.**

In future calls for applications for the TES, the UniFAST should establish a clear system of identification, based on the prioritization specified in the law.

## **9. Aim for clear and prompt implementing guidelines to avoid unnecessary delays in payments.**



# Recommendations

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## **10. Clarify the coverage of miscellaneous fees**

Decisions about upholding the quality of these institutions may be questioned by the political entities which govern the specific LUC.

## **11. Clarify the misconceptions surrounding Listahanan.**

Some respondents equated being in the Listahanan to be a beneficiary of Pantawid Pamilya, or at least to being below poverty line, which is not the case. UniFAST needs to clear up these misconceptions to avoid confusion, both among its stakeholders and within the organization.

## **12. Calibrate the timing of calls for applications and deadlines for submission of requirements.**

UniFAST should adjust the schedules for the various activities surrounding the implementation of the law in order to provide ample time for schools to accommodate these activities and for students to make decisions regarding their school of choice when enrolling.



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