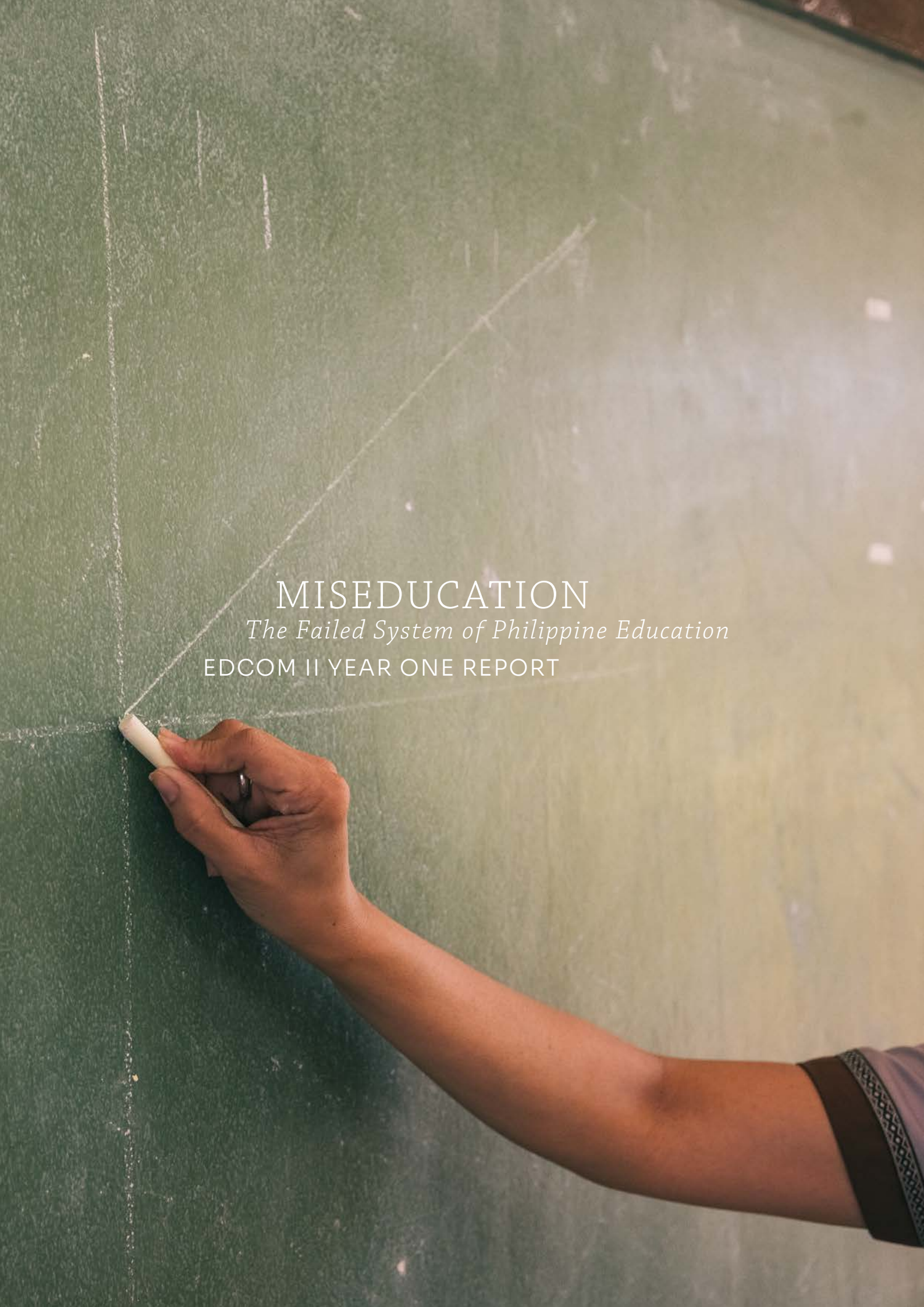


# MISEDUCATION

*The Failed System of Philippine Education*  
EDCOM II YEAR ONE REPORT



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a piece of white chalk, drawing a vertical line on a green chalkboard. The chalkboard is the background for the text. The hand is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, and the chalk is in contact with the board. The text is centered in the upper-middle part of the image.

MISEDUCATION  
*The Failed System of Philippine Education*  
EDCOM II YEAR ONE REPORT

This report was prepared in 2023 by the Second Congressional Commission on Education, a national commission tasked to undertake a comprehensive national assessment and evaluation of the performance of the Philippine education sector. It is composed of Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, Senator Francis Escudero (represented by Senator Aquilino Pimentel III), Representative Roman Romulo, and Representative Mark Go as Co-Chairpersons, together with Senator Juan Edgardo Angara, Senator Pia Cayetano, Senator Joel Villanueva, Representative Jose Francisco Benitez, Representative Khalid Dimaporo, and Representative Pablo John Garcia as Commissioners. This report is published in January 2024 in accordance with EDCOM II's mandate to report to Congress its accomplishments on a periodic basis (RA 11899, Sec. 7(1)).

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# List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
A&E	Accreditation and Equivalency
AACCUP	Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines
ABC	Approved Budget for the Contract
ACSCU-AAI	Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities–Accrediting Agency, Inc.
ACTRC	Assessment, Curriculum and Technology Research Centre
AI	artificial intelligence
ALCU	Association of Local Colleges and Universities
ALCUCOA	Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation
ALS	Alternative Learning System
ANA	Amplified Numeracy Assessment
AO	Administrative Officer
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
AY	academic year
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BE	Business Education
BEA	Bureau of Education Assessment
BECEd	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
BEEd	Bachelor of Elementary Education
BHROD	Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development
BHW	barangay health worker
BIR	Bureau of Internal Revenue
BLD	Bureau of Learning Delivery
BLEPT	Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers
BLGF	Bureau of Local Government Finance

BLR	Bureau of Learning Resources
BNS	barangay nutrition scholar
BSEd	Bachelor of Secondary Education
CBT	competency-based training
CDC	child development center
CDW	child development worker
CDW/T	child development worker/teacher
CG	curriculum guide
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CMO	CHED Memorandum Order
COCOPEA	Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations
COD	center of development
COE	center of excellence
CPBRD	Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department
CRLA	Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment
CSO	civil society organization
DA	Department of Agriculture
DATs	division achievement tests
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DECS	Department of Education, Culture, and Sports
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	Department of Education
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DLSU	De La Salle University
DM	DepEd Memorandum
DO	DepEd Order
DOE	Department of Energy
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health

DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EBEIS	Enhanced Basic Education Information System
EBT	enterprise-based training
ECCD	early childhood care and development
ECCDC	Early Childhood Care and Development Council
ECE	early childhood education
EDCOM I	First Congressional Commission on Education
EDCOM II	Second Congressional Commission on Education
EDQ	Examinee's Descriptive Questionnaire
EGEP	Evaluation of Graduate Education in the Philippines
EGMA	Early Grades Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grades Reading Assessment
ELLNA	Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment
EO	Executive Order
ETEEAP	Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program
EYA	Early Years Act
FIKD	First 1,000 Days
FAAP	Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines
FHE	free higher education
FLEMMS	Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey
FSP	Food Stamp Program
FY	fiscal year
GR	General Register
GAD	Gender and Development



GDP	gross domestic product
GEEAP	Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel
GER	gross enrollment ratio
GIDA	geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas
GPPB	Government Procurement Policy Board
GPPB-TSO	GPPB Technical Support Office
HB	House Bill
HEI	higher education institution
IB	industry board
IBT	institution-based training
ICT	information and communications technology
ICTO	Information Technology and Communications Office
IE Wave 3	Third Wave Impact Evaluation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-Ph	Improved Learning Outcomes for the Philippines
ILSA	international large-scale assessment
IPCRF	Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form
KRT	key reform thrusts
LCE	local chief executive
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LET	Licensure Examination for Teachers
LFS	Labor Force Survey
LGU	local government unit
LIS	Learner Information System
LSB	local school board
LUCs	local universities and colleges
M/CSWDO	Municipal/City Social Welfare and Development Officer
MFAT	Multi-Factored Assessment Tool
MIS	management information system
MOI	medium of instruction

MOOE	maintenance and other operating expenses
MOV	means of verification
MTB-MLE	Mother Tongue–Based Multilingual Education
NAST	National Academy of Science and Technology
NAT	National Achievement Test
NBDB	National Book Development Board
NC	National Certificate
NCAE	National Career Assessment Examination
NCR	National Capital Region
NDEP	National Drug Education Program
NEAP	National Educators’ Academy of the Philippines
NGA	national government agency
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NHTS-PR	National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction
NLC	National Learning Camp
NLCA	National Learning Camp Assessment
NLRP	National Learning Recovery Program
NMP	National Mathematics Program
NNC	National Nutrition Council
NNIS	National Nutrition Information System
NNQAA	National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies
NRP	National Reading Program
NSciTP	National Science and Technology Program
NSMW	National Schools Maintenance Week
NTESDP	National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAASCU	Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities
PACUCOA	Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation

PASUC	Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges
PBEd	Philippine Business for Education
PCO	Presidential Communications Office
PD	professional development
PDIS	Professional Development Information System
PEPT	Philippine Educational Placement Test
PEZA	Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Phil-IRI	Philippine Informal Reading Inventory
PHROD	Planning, Human Resource, and Organizational Development
PIDS	Philippine Institute for Development Studies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PNSL	place with no SUC/LUC
PQF	Philippine Qualifications Framework
PQF-NCC	Philippine Qualifications Framework–National Coordinating Council
PR	participation rate
PRC	Professional Regulation Commission
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSG	Policies, Standards, and Guidelines
PSOC	Philippine Standard Occupational Classification
PTCACS	Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System
QA	quality assurance
QMT	quality management team
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds
R/PTESDC	Regional and Provincial Technical Education and Skills Development Committees
RA	Republic Act
RATs	regional achievement tests
RBEC	Revised Basic Education Curriculum
RCTQ	Research Center for Teacher Quality
SB	Senate Bill

SBM	school-based management
SDC	Social Development Committee
SDO	school division office
SEA-PLM	Southeast Asian Primary Learning Metrics
SEF	Special Education Fund
SETG	Study on the Employment of TVET Graduates
SHS	senior high school
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLMs	self-learning modules
SMEA	School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment
SPG	Supreme Pupil Government
SRC	school report card
SSG	Supreme Student Government
STRIDE	Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation for Development
SUCs	state universities and colleges
SUs	state universities
SY	school year
TEC	Teacher Education Council
TechVoc	Technical-Vocational
TEI	Teacher Education Institution
TES	Tertiary Education Subsidy
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TIC	teacher in charge
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TR	training regulation
TTI	technical training institution
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVI	technical-vocational institution
TVL	technical-vocational-livelihood
UAQTEA	Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act

ULAP	Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines
UniFAST	Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education
UP	University of the Philippines
UPCIDS	UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies
UPPEJA	UP President Edgardo J. Angara
UPSKILL	US–Philippine Partnership for Skills, Innovation and Lifelong Learning
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTPRAS	Unified TVET Program Registration and Accreditation System with training regulation
YES-O	Youth for Environment in Schools Organization

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## Preface

The current iteration of the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) came into being in 2022 through Republic Act (RA) No. 11899, soon after the results of the 2018 Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) came out. The country's performance in the said assessment was dismal, to say the least, prompting stakeholders and advocates to declare a crisis in Philippine education. Coupled with a pandemic that further exposed vulnerabilities in the education sector, the issue, already long-standing at that point, became even more pronounced. Alarm bells were heard loud and clear in our legislative halls, and the EDCOM was convened.

The first question we were tasked to answer was: Does a crisis really exist? To this, our response is unequivocal: Yes, there is an education crisis.

*This report was not crafted to point fingers; from the onset, we knew that if we were to truly diagnose the ills of Philippine education, punitive thinking must be parked at the door. Our intention, instead, was to find things out and to instill a sense of urgency, along with a sense of doability—a clear horizon, and perhaps a sketch of the map toward that horizon.*

Such a question need not have taken years of study and consultations to be answered. The crisis is felt in the very bones of the nation—by parents, by educators, by employers, and by students themselves. Our goal for this report, therefore, is to go beyond merely sounding alarm bells that have long been sounded. And while greater public awareness will certainly be helpful, this report intends not only to confirm the existence of the crisis, but more importantly, to discover exactly how such a crisis came to be, and why it has persisted.

The Commission's First Year Report is a level-headed look at the extent of the challenges that our nation faces as regards education: its context and its roots, and hopefully, approaches and ways forward and out of the current situation. This report was not crafted to point fingers; from the onset, we knew that if we were to truly diagnose the ills of Philippine education, punitive thinking must be parked at the door. Our intention, instead, was to find things out and to instill a sense of urgency, along with a sense of doability—a clear horizon, and perhaps a sketch of the map toward that horizon.





This report is the product of the Commission’s hard work since it was formally convened on January 23, 2023. Data was gathered, numbers were analyzed, and the stories of teachers and students in the grassroots were heard. Over time, we were able to paint a picture of why the country is performing so poorly. We have strived to make this picture as comprehensive as can be, while acknowledging that it is by no means complete. We invite all to scrutinize our findings; we welcome the expansion of the reservoir of insight that the nation can draw upon as we address the education crisis.

Such solidarity is necessary, because the crisis is complex, immense, and has become deeply rooted in a sector that has for many years suffered from piecemeal, albeit well-intentioned, reforms. And if there is one takeaway that we wish the reader might acquire from this report, it is that all of us must work, and must work together. Stakeholders, from the top level of policymaking to the frontlines in our communities, must begin to think of themselves as part of a larger whole. Only then can we create true synergy; only then can we execute a true strategy, build a true system; only then can we shed our disconnects and embark on a collaborative journey that will allow the Filipinos to fulfill their truest potential.



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## Executive Summary

As the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) completes its first year, it finds itself in a position to shed light on the context and challenges that need to be confronted in its first priority areas.

A system is defined as “a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.” By this standard, the education system in the Philippines struggles to meet the criteria of a “system.” By the standards of the 1987 Constitution as well, it is short of “a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education.” Instead, agencies, bureaus, and offices have focused on their respective mandates and targets, often independent of one another. This is evident in the challenges uncovered by the Commission in its first year: from the fragmented implementation of ECCD interventions; the disjointed pathways in teacher development (from preservice to licensure, to hiring); the lack of education programs for critical education professionals; the absence of monitoring mechanisms, as well as the inequities reinforced by the Special Education Fund; and the ineffective coordination aggravated by the immoderate number of interagency bodies to which DepEd, CHED, and TESDA need to attend. This, amidst the ever expanding mandates of the 3 agencies, despite their finite number of personnel.



Ultimately, this has led to the “miseducation”—or plainly, poorly delivered education—of Filipino learners, bringing about a profound education crisis, as has been laid bare by both national and international assessments—issues that the Commission now seeks to squarely address.

---

## Early Childhood Care and Development

**The Philippines has one of the highest prevalence of under-5 stunting in the world, at 26.7%, compared to the global average of 22.3%.** Nutrition-specific interventions in the Philippines for children below 5 years old generally adhere to global recommendations, but implementation has been fragmented, coverage remains low, and targeting of interventions has been weak. For instance, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) supplementary feeding program feeds all children in day care centers, despite its mandate under Republic Act (RA) No. 11037 to feed only malnourished children. Meanwhile, data from the Department of Education (DepEd) school-based feeding program show that at most 30% of learners fall back to become “wasted” and “severely wasted” despite months of interventions. To resolve challenges in nutrition in the early years, strong collaboration, equitable resourcing, and clear accountability across the ECCD Council, DepEd, DOH, NNC, DSWD, and LGUs are imperative.

**Early childhood education is not equally accessible throughout the country.**

Despite RA 6972 of 1990 requiring each province, city, or municipality to establish a day care center in every barangay, data from the DSWD and Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council show that only 36% have at least 1 child development center (CDC) per day care, or 15,207 out of 42,027 barangays in the country. The lowest coverage of CDCs is seen in Region VIII, with only 479 recorded CDCs out of 4,365 barangays (11%), and in the Cordillera Administrative Region, with only 152 recorded CDCs out of 1,178 barangays (13%). Extreme discrepancies also exist, with first-class municipalities having up to 6 centers for every 10,000 children aged 3 to 4 versus 1 to 2 only in sixth-class municipalities.

**Most day care teachers and workers are aging and lack training in early childhood education (ECE).** Fifty-two percent have a college degree, and 17% have only a high school diploma, and only a few have trained in ECCD. The

Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) current undergraduate program in ECE prepares graduates typically for 0–4 years old (Pre-K) and Key Stage 1 (Kindergarten to Grade 3) learners. However, of the 224 higher education institutions (HEIs) offering the ECE teaching program, there have only been 3,993 ECE graduates since 2005, or about 80 annually. This falls short of the demand for Kindergarten teachers alone. As governed by RA 7836 of 1994, ECE graduates specializing in teaching 0–4 year old children who want to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers need to register for the Elementary Level exam, even if it currently encompasses competencies and learning areas for children beyond the early years (0–4).

**Eighty-nine percent of child development teachers and workers hold nonpermanent positions and receive an average of Php 5,000 per month.**

Data from the DSWD show that 19% receive an honorarium of less than Php 1,000 per month. Worse, according to UNICEF, the average salary is Php 5,000 per month versus the starting salary of a Kindergarten teacher in DepEd of Php 27,000 per month.

---

## Basic Education

**Despite improvements in enrollment rates in basic education over the past decade, concerns persist about the quality of the education system.**

The Human Capital Index estimates that a Filipino learner who starts school at 4 years old would have received 12.9 years of schooling by age 18; however, factoring in what children learn, this could be equivalent to only 7.5 years. This estimate is based on the performance of the Philippines in various international large-scale assessments in 2018 and 2019. These results are also confirmed by the National Achievement Test (NAT) for Grade 6 (SY 2020–2021), which shows that students are nearly proficient in Filipino, with a mean percentage score of 54%, but achieved only a low proficiency in Math (41%), English (44%), Araling Panlipunan (44%), and Science (44%).

To address issues of quality, EDCOM II focused on the availability of textbooks in public schools, the adequacy and effectiveness of the assessment system, and the review of recent policy reforms in curriculum and instruction.

**Since 2012, only 27 textbooks have been procured for Grade 1 to Grade 10, despite substantial budget allocations.** DepEd’s budget utilization data show that from 2018 to 2022 alone, a total of Php 12.6 billion has been allocated to textbooks and other instructional materials, but only Php 4.5 billion (35.3%) has been obligated and Php 952 million (7.5%) has been disbursed.

**Out of the 27 key stage assessments scheduled to be conducted from SY 2016–2017 to SY 2022–2023, 24 encountered problems.** Thirteen were delayed, and 11 were not administered at all. This has led to a proliferation of assessment activities that inform the short-term decisions of various stakeholders but are not useful for any long-term planning or policymaking.

**The challenge in system assessments stems from procurement and staffing issues.** Contracts for national assessments are typically divided into 3 lots—namely, printing and warehousing, scanning and processing of test results, and delivery and retrieval of materials. From consultations with DepEd, EDCOM II finds that very few vendors have shown interest in bidding for Lots 1 and 2 in recent years due to challenges such as the quarantine requirement and unattractive contract pricing.

In terms of staffing, DepEd’s Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA) is responsible for 12 assessment programs annually but has 19 unfilled positions out of its 55 regular and coterminous items. Data from CHED show that of the country’s 2,396 higher education institutions, only 4 offer master’s programs related to educational assessment. These programs maintain low enrollment rates and produce an average of only 7 graduates each year. Thus, while competencies in educational assessment are important for employees of BEA, graduates of the said programs seldom consider working in the bureau.

**The revised K to 10 curriculum guides can enhance learning outcomes, but teachers cannot implement them without adequate support.** Teachers appreciate efforts to decongest the curriculum, but they are also concerned about repeated competencies and are challenged by the spiral progression approach. DepEd claims to have already addressed these in the final version of the curriculum guides, which are now being piloted in 35 schools across 7 regions. Meanwhile, challenges in implementation include time constraints, incomplete teaching and learning resources, and limited facilities. EDCOM II recommends that DepEd address these issues for effective curriculum delivery.

**The National Learning Recovery Program is a step in the right direction, but many of the components remain unclear and have no implementing guidelines.**

For example, in the learning camp (an end-of-school-year remediation program), EDCOM II found that learners who were most in need of remediation were often those who did not participate. Further, while baseline and end-line assessments were administered, results remained unavailable, making it difficult to group learners by ability and track their progress. It is imperative that learning recovery efforts, especially in Reading, are ramped up urgently, with a focus on Key Stage 1 (Kindergarten to Grade 3), but also for learners in other grade levels, majority of whom, as data show, are not equipped with these foundational competencies.

**While using the child's first language in instruction is consistent with theories in pedagogy, it has been difficult to implement due to the highly centralized structure of DepEd.**

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## Higher Education

**More learners are enrolling in higher education, particularly in public institutions, but a large number of students are dropping out before completing their degrees.** The Philippines fares relatively well in terms of gross enrollment rates in tertiary education, at 34.89%, compared to the lower-middle-income countries group average of 25.92%. However, it places close to last when compared to its ASEAN peers. The past decades saw a surge in enrollment at state university and college (SUC) satellite campuses (23% of the total) and main campuses (19%). On the other hand, the private school share in enrollment is at its lowest since 1945, at 50%. Despite increases in enrollment, attrition rates have more than doubled within only 3 years, from 20% in 2019 to 41% in 2020.

**While some progress in providing fair access to higher education has been made, quality higher education remains elusive.** Data show the incremental increases in enrollment of the poorest students (lowest decile) from only 1.7% in 1999 to 6.1% in 2019. But during the same period, the enrollment share of autonomous and deregulated HEIs—deemed to have the highest levels of quality among private institutions—dropped from 26% in 2010 to 18% in 2018.



**The increase in the number of autonomous and deregulated institutions, and centers of excellence and development has been slow.** From 2001 to 2021, the number of autonomous and deregulated private HEIs increased from 53 to only 89. Further, only 182 out of 2,396 HEIs nationwide have centers of excellence or development (COEs or CODs). Notably, 57% of these COEs are in 7 institutions only, 6 of which are in the National Capital Region (NCR). For voluntary accreditation, improvements are likewise modest, from 20% having accredited programs in 2009 to just 29% in 2018. Admittedly, this is affected by various factors, including its voluntary nature, the costs entailed, as well timelines for accreditation.

EDCOM II also finds that the reconstitution of technical panels has been incremental, with only 15 out of the 98 required panels being reconstituted, and thus recommends fast-tracking the process to control and assure delivery of quality programs.

**Most beneficiaries of the tertiary education subsidy were not the poorest.**

Between 2018 and 2022, the share of the poorest of the poor (Listahanan 2.0 and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries) in the subsidy declined drastically, from 74% to 31%. Instead, the majority of grantees were those in municipalities and cities without SUCs and local universities and colleges (LUCs) (from 26% to 69%). This is contrary to the prioritization prescribed by the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (UAQTEA). Thus, EDCOM II recommended a special provision in the FY 2024 General Appropriations Act (GAA) to enhance targeting and address the issue of equitable access.

**Enrollment and budgetary allocations to the Free Higher Education Program have increased significantly.**

The budget, particularly allocated toward the LUCs, has increased by 217% between 2018 and 2022. Notably, regional disparities are prominent, with the largest increases in enrollment seen in the NCR at 530%. From 2018 to 2023, there was a significant increase in the budget for the Free Higher Education Program from 40.02% to 55.15%, whereas the budget for the Tertiary Education Program only marginally increased from 39.84% to 44.40%.

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## Teacher Education

**Passing rates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) have been low, and the quality assurance of teacher education institutions is weak.** Between 2009 and 2023, the average passing rate in the licensure examinations for elementary (33%) and secondary (40%) has been dismal compared to passing rates in other professions. Worse, data show that between 2012 and 2022, 77 HEIs offering Bachelor of Elementary Education and 105 HEIs offering Bachelor of Secondary Education continued operations despite having consistently zero passing rates in the LET.

**Enhancement of the Teacher Education Council (TEC) has been at a standstill for 2 years, despite the pressing need for reforms.** For all the efforts to improve the governance of teacher education and development, little progress has been made since EDCOM I. Despite the passage of the Excellence in Teacher Education Act, which seeks to strengthen the TEC and address the coordination challenges in the space (passed on April 27, 2022, and its IRR on May 26, 2023), the full operationalization of the Council remains to be awaited.

**Teachers still bear the burden of administrative and ancillary tasks, despite efforts to allow them to focus on teaching.** Teachers continue to be burdened by 50 nonteaching or administrative tasks, based on DepEd's inventory. While administrative officers have been hired (5,000 per year starting in 2020), the impact remains limited. This is aggravated by the uneven allocation of support staff across schools, with some having more than 500 teachers and only 4 nonteaching personnel.

**Career advancement and professional development opportunities remain limited.** Most teachers lament the scarcity of master teacher positions (due to the 2004 quota system that allows master teacher positions for up to only 10% of authorized teacher positions in the district), which prevents them from getting promoted despite meeting requirements. Meanwhile, teachers also express difficulty in accessing training opportunities, either due to limited slots (for those organized by DepEd) or cost (for private ones).

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## Technical-Vocational Education and Training

**Participation in technical-vocational education and training (TVET) has increased from 333,789 in 1991 to 2.3 million in 2020.** This was buoyed by the increase in TVET institutions from 1,270 to 4,550 in the same period and the introduction of many student subsidies and scholarships, including the Private Education Student Financial Assistance, the Special Training for Employment Program, the Training for Work Scholarship Program, and the Tertiary Education Subsidy. A large proportion of graduates, however, do not undergo assessment certification (45% in 2021 and 26% in 2022), although passing rates are high for those who do (about 93%).

**The majority of students are enrolled in community-based training (CBT) programs, constituting 39% of the total enrollment.** In fact, between 2014 and 2022, there were 3.7 million trainees. CBT programs, however, are typically not assessed since most are not covered by training regulations, and thus graduates could not gain National Certificates (NCs). On the other hand, only 9% of total TVET enrollment is completed through enterprise-based programs, despite successive TESDA targets to increase this to 40% by 2022.

**Policies related to enterprise-based training (EBT) are confusing and need to be clarified and streamlined.** One major challenge would be the multiple policies covering 6 different forms of EBT, including apprenticeship, dual training systems, learnership, dualized training programs, supervised industry learning, and the Program on Accelerating Farm School Establishment. Stakeholders expressed the need to simplify and tailor-fit the programs to the unique needs of different industries and learners that could benefit from the program.

**Sixty-four percent of programs with training regulations are lower-skill (NC I and NC II).** TESDA data further show that the proportion of training regulations with NCs III and IV is only 35%. Meanwhile, most registered programs are in NC II (56%). Moreover, there are very few training regulations available for NC IV (7%) and no training regulations for NC V. This is concerning given the analysis that shows that improvements in income before and after training are substantial only for those completing NCs III and IV.



**Out of a total of 1,888 programs, only 315 have corresponding training regulations (TRs), leaving a significant number of programs with no training regulations (NTR).** This means that less than 15% of the training programs of TESDA lead to a National Certificate. During consultations, it was revealed that TR development could take from 6 months to 2 years, making it difficult for training programs to be nimble enough to respond to the rapidly changing needs of industry.

**Industry participation remains limited and prohibitive, while processing times for TESDA are slow.** To date, there are only 40 TESDA-recognized industry boards (IBs) at varying levels—national, regional, and provincial. This is concentrated in only 8 industries: agri-fishery (12), with 1 national IB, 5 regional IBs, and 6 provincial IBs; tourism (6), 1 national IB and 5 provincial IBs; construction (4), 1 national IB and 3 provincial IBs; ICT (8), 2 national IBs, 4 regional IBs, and 2 provincial IBs; manufacturing (5), 1 national IB, 2 regional IBs, and 2 provincial IBs; garments (1), 1 provincial IB; creatives (2), 1 regional IB and 1 provincial IB; and logistics (2), 2 regional IBs. During EDCOM consultations, industries decried the voluminous paperwork, the rigid but obsolete requirements, and the long processing times of TESDA. For instance, the TESDA Board, which approves training regulations, only met once in 2022 and twice in 2023.

These boards are strategically focused on 8 distinct industries, showcasing a varied distribution: This distribution underscores the current framework of TESDA's recognition in fostering skill development and standardization within specific sectors at different geographical levels.

**The shortage of instructors, assessors, and certifiers from industry is a binding constraint.** During the consultations, it was noted that some instructors and trainers from technical-vocational institutions (TVIs) have been pirated by senior high schools (SHSs) that offer the technical-vocational-livelihood (TVL) track. It was identified that there is a need for an additional 11,838 competency assessors to facilitate the assessment and certification of students enrolled in the SHS TVL track. During the Visayas consultations, it was repeatedly mentioned that students are not assessed because there are no assessors in their area. This is problematic because transportation would add to the cost of their training.

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## Governance and Finance

**The staffing levels in CHED and TESDA have not kept pace with the growing responsibilities of the agencies and the increased investments in education from both public and private sectors.** CHED's budget increased by 633% from 2013 to 2023, but the agency's staffing complement only increased by 22.7%, from 543 to 666 within the same period. In particular, staffing in field offices remains lean. CHED's regional offices have only 20–28 regular personnel, while TESDA's provincial offices have only 7–12 staff with plantilla. As for DepEd, preliminary analysis suggests there are deficits of over 10,000 administrative officer positions in public schools based on staffing standards issued by the Department of Budget and Management in 1997. In the absence of support staff, administrative tasks are taken on by teachers and school heads, affecting their ability to carry out primary responsibilities, which in turn impacts the quality of learning outcomes.

**The failure to permanently establish a high-level coordinating body as envisioned by EDCOM I has resulted in a long-standing lack of effective coordination between the education agencies since trifocalization took place in the 1990s.** In the absence of this coordinating body, at least 68 interagency bodies have been established to enable coordination on a broad range of concerns. The amount of time required to attend to all these bodies suggests that the current situation is impracticable.

**There is misalignment in the systems and accountability frameworks intended to monitor and oversee performance at the system, agency, and individual levels within the public sector.** These fail to hold individuals accountable and to incentivize enhanced performance. Best practices in the performance management systems of Punjab, Pakistan; New South Wales in Australia; and Indonesia show possible ways forward: adopt an outcome-oriented and holistic perspective in crafting few but easy-to-understand targets; differentiate targets across different management systems; use performance management as a diagnostic tool rather than a punitive measure; account for systemic equity; and put in place an accompanying system of support to drive improvements.

**While there has been substantial growth in both public and private sector investments in education since EDCOM I, the country's level of investment falls short when compared to its better-performing ASEAN neighbors.**

Analysis of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results suggests that cumulative education expenditure per student from age 6 to 15 is associated with good performance. The Philippines currently has a cumulative spending of USD 11,000 (PPP), which is far from the USD 50,000 threshold, at which the positive relationship tapers off.

**There is a marked disparity in the Special Education Fund (SEF) income among different types of local government units (LGUs).** Municipalities are the worst off, with a median SEF income of Php 1.6 million, or a mere 4% of the median SEF income of cities and provinces. Analysis of SEF income distribution also shows that the SEF income of a typical city or province would be at least 4 times higher than that of a typical municipality. However, there is a considerable gap even between municipalities, with first-income-class municipalities having 68 times more SEF income than their sixth-income-class peers. This indicates that expanding the use of the SEF beyond supplementing the budgetary needs of school operations would put particular LGUs at a severe disadvantage without measures that enable equitable allocation.

**Current levels of school maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) budgets are insufficient to fully cover the operating costs of public elementary and high schools.** EDCOM II consultations with school heads and teachers found that 30% to 70% of the school MOOE budget is spent on utility bills alone, which leaves meager funds available for improvement projects and initiatives that could address local needs and support better learning.

**Efforts to empower schools and local communities through the adoption of school-based management (SBM) face challenges such as dependence on foreign-assisted projects, frequent turnover of education leadership, and a deeply ingrained hierarchical organizational culture resulting from years of centralization, which constrain the ability of SBM to genuinely revolutionize basic education at the grassroots level.** Despite these setbacks, there continues to be support for decentralization at the local level. Informal and ad-hoc devolution of education responsibilities and functions is already being implemented locally, but the absence of a formal policy hinders local actors from taking a more active role and reaping the full benefits of devolution—faster, more focused responses, and innovative solutions that address local context and needs.

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# EDCOM Year 1 Recommendations

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## Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

### Priority 1: Nutrition and Feeding

1. **Study the equitable allocation of resources by identifying better targeting mechanisms and coverage for nutritionally at-risk children to create a long-term and sustainable impact of health and nutrition programs.** Prioritizing the equitable distribution of resources, especially in lower-income municipalities, can ensure that each child has access to health and nutrition interventions that are critical to early childhood care and development.
2. **Find possible complementarities of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) and the Food Stamp Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.** This is in recognition that the challenge of nutrition demands a multisectoral solution for addressing the intricacies of maternal and child health and nutrition comprehensively.

**EDCOM I has proposed a comprehensive set of evidence-based nutrition interventions during the early years.** This is reflected in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2024, where Php 300 million is specifically designated for nutritionally at-risk pregnant mothers and children below 5 years old in fifth- and sixth-class municipalities exhibiting more than or equal to 15% stunting rates in nonfood stamp sites. There should be interventions that aim to complement the Philippine Multisectoral Nutrition Project, emphasizing a concerted effort to address nutrition challenges comprehensively.

### Priority 2: Supply-Side Factors

3. **Develop a universal ECCD database.** Consolidated data from multisectoral and interagency sources are essential for the purpose of systematic monitoring, reporting, and targeted intervention. This will empower agencies to align efforts, allocate resources, and implement interventions efficiently.

4. **Expand the ECCD provisions to encompass private, community-based, and home-based programs.** To achieve universal access to ECCD, especially for ages 3–4, it is imperative to expand and support alternative delivery modes.
5. **Develop education pathways for child development workers and teachers through certificate programs by the Technical Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).**

EDCOM II has formally requested TESDA and CHED to undertake the development of training regulations (for National Certificates) and Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (for associate degrees). Both agencies have committed to initiating this process.

6. **Create plantilla positions for child development workers and teachers.**

#### **Priority 4: Governance and Financing of ECCD**

7. **Strengthen the ECCD Council Governing Board to include the Department of the Interior and Local Government.**
8. **Include a representative of ECCD on the local school board.**

The above 3 interventions (Recommendations 6, 7, and 8) are in the bill filed by EDCOM II Commissioners through provisions in the Basic Education and Early Childhood Alignment Act, or Senate Bill No. 2029; and House Bill No. 8393, authored by Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian, EDCOM II co-chair, and Representative Jose Francisco B. Benitez, who serves as co-chair for the standing committee on ECCD.

9. **Study complementarities in service delivery on the ground: local councils for the protection of children, barangay nutrition scholars, and barangay health workers.**
10. **Establish equity-oriented funding and policy interventions.** This should focus on ensuring access to child development centers, as well as the resourcing of nutrition programs, in fifth- and sixth-class municipalities and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

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## Basic Education

### Priority 5: Learning Resources

11. **For the Department of Education (DepEd) to look into the possibility of procuring books that are already available on the market rather than engaging publishers to develop new ones.**

**EDCOM II urged DepEd to review its strategy for ensuring timely textbook procurement for the upcoming school year.** Given that the estimated duration of the procurement process under the new policy takes a year, DepEd must be prepared to provide alternative teaching and learning resources if it intends to roll out the MATATAG curriculum in SY 2024–2025.

### Priority 6: Measurement of Learning Outcomes

12. **Review the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS).** FLEMMS's framework and results are published and widely disseminated; however, the results of FLEMMS are not used by DepEd for planning curricular interventions. One possible reason is that the definitions of basic literacy and functional literacy measured by the parameters of FLEMMS do not necessarily match the literacies measured by DepEd.
13. **For DepEd to streamline the current assessment landscape in basic education as a temporary measure.** DepEd should develop a cohesive, unified assessment framework that comprehensively encompasses all levels of assessments. The implementation of standardized assessments at the regional and division levels should also be discouraged, provided that DepEd can assure the consistent administration and timely release of results for national key stage assessments, such as the National Achievement Test and the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment.
14. **Modernize test administration, emphasizing investment in essential components such as infrastructure, staffing, and training that are vital for the successful implementation of computer-based assessments.** This will alleviate the multitude of procurement challenges associated with traditional paper-based tests while enhancing data collection and analysis and ensuring prompt release and analysis of assessment results.

15. **Expand the staffing complement within the Bureau of Education Assessment and place emphasis on the need for implementing comprehensive training and mentoring programs.**

### **Priority 7: Curriculum and Instruction**

16. **For DepEd to address issues hindering teachers from delivering quality instruction prior to the full implementation of the revised curriculum.**

These include teacher training and the development and distribution of learning resources. DepEd should also formulate a contingency plan to ensure that teachers and learners will have adequate learning resources by the upcoming school year.

**To complement initiatives to assess and evaluate the curriculum and instruction, the EDCOM II Commissioners from the House of Representatives approved House Bill (HB) No. 6717, a bill suspending the implementation of the Mother Tongue–Based Multilingual Education (MTB–MLE), under Sec. 4 of Republic Act (RA) No. 10533, otherwise known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, which mandates the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction or first language from Kindergarten to Grade 3.**

HB 6717 was approved on the third reading on February 6, 2023. It was transmitted to and received by the Senate on February 7, 2023, and further hearings were conducted by the Senate Committee on Basic Education. The Committee Report was calendared for ordinary business on November 22, 2023.

The suspension of the MTB–MLE is also being considered in Senate Bill (SB) No. 2457, An Act Redefining the Application of the Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3, Amending for the Purpose Sections 4 and 5 of RA 10533 by Senator Gatchalian.

17. **For DepEd to consider the consultation findings of EDCOM II in their implementation of the National Learning Recovery Program.**
- a. Conduct regular and timely assessments that yield granular data on learner progress;
  - b. Group learners according to their level of proficiency rather than their grade level;
  - c. Prioritize foundational skills in reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as socioemotional learning; and
  - d. Mobilize parents and the community to provide the interventions as support to teachers.

**In parallel with the consultation of existing learning recovery programs and initiatives of DepEd, EDCOM II Commissioners filed legislation to provide systematic learning interventions to improve learning outcomes through the proposed ARAL Program Act, An Act Establishing an Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes (SB 1604 by Senator Gatchalian et al. and HB 8210 by Representative Romulo et al.).**

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## Higher Education

### **Priority 11a: Access to Quality Education**

18. **Prioritize the poorest of the poor for the Tertiary Education Subsidy.**

**EDCOM II proposed a special provision in the GAA 2024 that aims to reemphasize the prioritization of students from Listahanan 3.0 and the 4Ps categories** (GAA FY 2024, Volume I-B, p. 484). This initiative is geared toward fostering more equitable access to tertiary education, making it imperative that the implementation of this reprioritization by the Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education be closely supervised in the upcoming year. On top of aligning the targeting mechanisms with the objectives of the Act, a reassessment of the definition of “access” is also recommended.



**19. Imperative to the success of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act is addressing the consequences of Free Higher Education through the following recommendations:**

- a. Provide adequate and rationalized support to public higher education institutions (HEIs) while considering the pressing concerns of public financial sustainability;
- b. Strictly monitor the public sector to ensure that it does not exceed its respective carrying capacities;
- c. Take into account the crowding out effect on private higher education providers to foster complementarity; and
- d. Explore alternative financing models (e.g., voucher system and Student Financial Assistance Programs, or StuFAPs) to enhance student accessibility to quality education in private HEIs while simultaneously relieving the crowding out effect.

**EDCOM II Commissioners filed SB 360 and HB 7922, amending RA 10931, or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, to include a voucher system for qualified private HEIs and technical-vocational institutions.** HB 7922 by

Representative Mark Go et al. was approved on the third reading and transmitted to the Senate on May 24, 2023. SB 1360 by Senator Chiz Escudero et al. is pending on second reading.

**Priority 11b: Quality Assurance**

**20. For CHED to fast-track the reconstitution of the remaining 83 technical panels** to uphold and maintain the quality of programs offered by HEIs.

On top of this, their reconstitution must be monitored in year 2 so that skills taught to and gained by students meet the dynamic demands of the labor market.

**21. Strengthen the relationship between CHED and accreditation agencies**

with clearer terms of engagement to ensure complementarity between both parties and improve the quality assurance mechanisms in the higher education ecosystem. Also, examine constraints to accreditation of HEIs.

**22. Actively review and revise the existing horizontal typology and aims to develop a system grounded in empirical evidence that accurately reflects the current characteristics and diversity of HEIs.**

As part of quality assurance initiatives, EDCOM II adopted Representative Go's HB 7990, or An Act Strengthening the Establishment and Operations of HEIs, to improve the external governance of higher education.

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## Teacher Education

### **Priority 16: Alignment of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and DepEd (Including the Teacher Education Council) on Teacher Education and Development**

23. **Conduct an independent study to assess the PRC's true level of policy adoption and scrutinize the validity and reliability of the Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers.**

EDCOM II filed HB 8559, which seeks to amend the Teachers Professionalization Act, or RA 7836. The bill—authored by EDCOM Commissioners, namely, Representatives Go, Romulo, Benitez, Dimaporo, and Garcia—was filed on June 22, 2023, and is currently pending with the House Committee on Civil Service Professional Regulation.

### **Priority 18: In-Service Training and Development, Including Teacher Welfare**

24. **Standardize school staffing and organizational structure to streamline workload distribution.** The provision of an Administrative Officer II at the school level, while helpful, cannot alleviate all the assigned ancillary tasks for teachers.
25. **Assign the Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development as the clearinghouse for school ancillary and nonteaching tasks.** The clearinghouse is tasked with reviewing and proposing policies and programs and their implications for teacher workload. Additionally, it will maintain an inventory of official school processes and tasks assigned to teachers affecting their workload, make recommendations for possible streamlining and/or harmonization, and review and provide recommendations on congressional measures with implications for teacher workload.

26. **Establish a national Professional Development Information System (PDIS)**, a computer-based system to track teachers' professional development that integrates the HRIS (Human Resource Information System) with the (a) professional profiles (such as education degree/s, specialization, and trainings attended), (b) professional needs; and (c) career stages of teachers and school heads.
27. **Review the Human Resource Development Fund's allocation, planning, availment, and utilization processes.** An evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Recognition System of the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) is suggested to examine the implementation of needs assessments on the ground and assist NEAP in developing a functional PDIS.
28. **Review the quality and responsiveness of preservice teacher education.** Given the changes in the basic education curriculum, the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs) of the different teacher education programs need to ensure that the specializations match the needs of schools and learners.

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## Technical-Vocational Education and Training & Lifelong Learning

### Priority 20: Industry Involvement and Investment in Upskilling Programs

29. **Review scholarship policies to be more responsive to the unique needs and challenges faced by TVET (technical-vocational education and training) learners.**
30. **Rationalize policies on enterprise-based training.**

**EDCOM II Commissioners filed SB 363 and HB 7400, or the Enterprise-Based Education and Training to Employment Act.** SB 363, filed by Senator Joel Villanueva, is currently at the technical working group level; while HB 7400, authored by Representative Mark Go, was approved on the third reading at the House of Representatives.

**EDCOM II adopted SB 364, or the Lifelong Learning Development Framework Act, by Senator Villanueva.** The bill mandates the development of a lifelong learning framework to be developed by the Philippine Qualifications Framework–National Coordinating Council.

**EDCOM II adopted HB 7370 by Representative Go, creating a Tripartite Council.** The Tripartite Council introduced in the bill shall formulate policies and programs to address the job–skills mismatch in the country. It shall be a coordinating body among the government, academe, and industry sectors to primarily monitor economic trends in the global and domestic markets. HB 7370 was approved on the third reading on March 21, 2023, and transmitted to the Senate on March 22, 2023. The Senate Committee on Higher Education has already adopted the bill on August 1, 2023, and is now waiting for the Committee Report.

### **Priority 21: Ensuring Quality in Providing TVET for Better Jobs**

31. **Improve data collection processes for a more efficient trainee tracing system within the TVET sector.** Employ robust data collection mechanisms, potentially incorporating advanced analytics and tracking technologies, to yield accurate insights into the employment outcomes and career paths of TVET graduates.
32. **Align the Study on the Employment of TVET Graduates data with the Labor Force Survey (LFS) for seamless tracing.** Refine the wording of questions related to educational attainment and incorporate Philippine Standard Occupational Classification codes to enhance analysis and ease the tracing of TESDA program takers. According to TESDA, there are ongoing discussions with the Philippine Statistics Authority to better align data collection to accurately capture TVET in the LFS.
33. **Develop a centralized management information system of TESDA that traces the creation, delivery, and lifespan of all TESDA programs and a similar version for trainees,** possibly in collaboration with the Department of Information and Communications Technology.
34. **Increase funding for training programs and expand scholarship opportunities to cater to more learners in need.** Adequate funding is fundamental to overcoming financial barriers that often hinder access to quality vocational training.

35. **Initiate a paradigm shift toward an industry-driven incentive framework to foster a more conducive environment for industry participation.** The active involvement of industries in designing and implementing incentive programs ensures that these initiatives align with their needs and encourages active engagement. In addition, crucial components of a holistic solution are advocating for increased funding and developing a comprehensive strategy to gain industry “buy-in.”

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## Governance and Finance

### Priority 23: Seamless and Integrated Delivery of Education

36. **Study the establishment of a national-level coordinating mechanism.**
37. **Study how the capacity to exercise oversight of both the Office of the President and the Legislature could be strengthened.** This would ensure continuous technical support across political administrations, particularly in tracking the attainment of long-term targets in education.
38. **Sustain increases in education investments.** It is important, however, to ensure that these resources are allocated in an equitable manner, strategically impact learning outcomes (e.g., early childhood education and nutrition), and utilized on time.
39. **Review the Boncodin Formula used to compute the School MOOE (maintenance and other operating expenses) budget**—In particular, the different cost drivers of school operational expenses across varied contexts to ensure that future updates to the formula are responsive to the needs of schools, as well as equity in resource allocations.
40. **Formulate a framework that guides how the provincial Special Education Fund (SEF) could complement the municipal SEF** in the interest of promoting equitable and needs-based allocation.



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## Introduction

**“I wish I could actually spend time teaching”** is a common lament among teachers in the Philippine public school system. In our many consultations in the past year, teachers around the country, including Manila, Iloilo, Negros, and Davao, revealed this widespread concern: that they spent majority of their work hours doing anything but teaching. They manage school canteens and school-based feeding programs, oversee *Gulayan sa Paaralan* and the National Drug Education Program, serve as the school’s engineering administrators and registrars, coordinate the 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), and even spend approximately 70 out of 220 school days entering data into the DepEd system<sup>1</sup>—basically, diverting them from what they aspired to do and actually studied for: teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on an analysis conducted by the Analytics Association of the Philippines, which EDCOM is currently confirming in the studies it is undertaking.

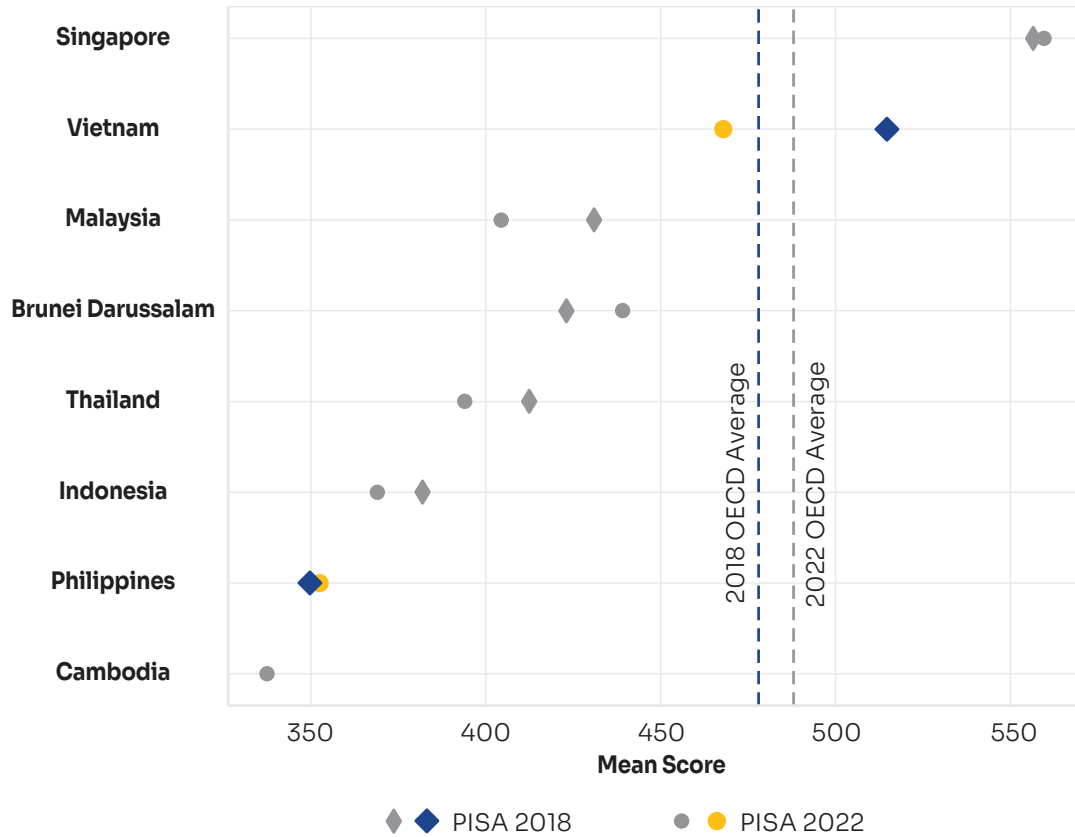


*We feared there was a deep-rooted education crisis in the country, and we wanted to confirm its existence, as well as severity. Confirmation would mean it is time for something more drastic: to retool the entire education system because decades of earnest but incremental reforms still fell short of what Filipino learners deserved.*

The first Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) was established to systematically review the problems of our Education system after the Philippine Government's reformation in 1986. This second one, however, stemmed from our country's dismal performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018. We feared there was a deep-rooted education crisis in the country, and we wanted to confirm its existence, as well as severity. Confirmation would mean it is time for something more drastic: to retool the entire education system because decades of earnest but incremental reforms still fell short of what Filipino learners deserved.

More recently, the 2022 PISA results show that our performance remains the same. Grade 10 Filipinos scored lowest among all ASEAN countries in Math, Reading, and Science, besting only Cambodia (see Figure 1) with more than 75% of our learners scoring lower than Level 2, or the minimum level of proficiency in Math, Reading, and Science. This was the case for most of our schools, public or private. Alarming, data also shows that our best learners are comparable only to the average student in Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, and Vietnam, and correspond to the worst performers in Singapore.

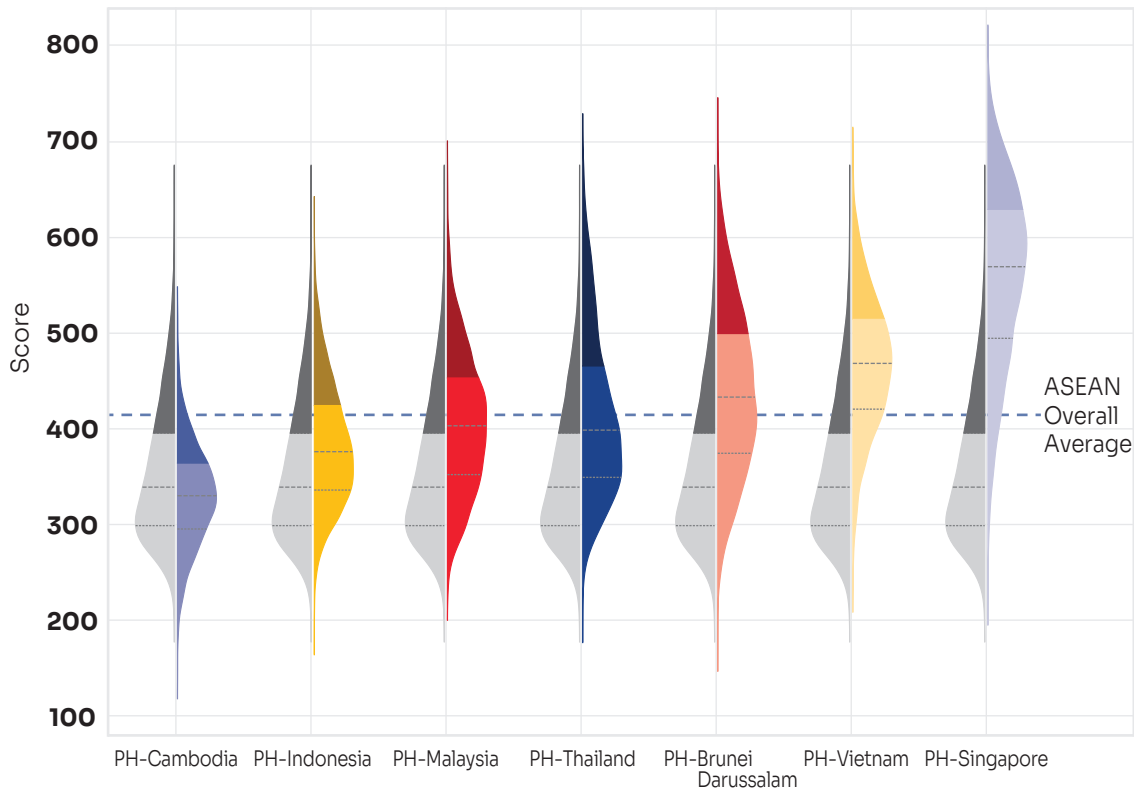
**FIGURE 1**  
**Asean Performance Overall in PISA 2018 and 2022**



*Note: Cambodia did not participate in PISA 2018.*

If there is anything this report aims to impart on its readers, it is this: There is an education crisis in the country.

In 1940, the Commonwealth government made primary education compulsory. In 1953, as the country recovered from the Second World War, compulsory education was extended to Grade 6. We abolished tuition fees in public high schools in 1989, made Kindergarten compulsory in 2012, and expanded our basic education system to include Grades 11 and 12 in 2013. Most recently, we eliminated tuition fees in all state colleges and universities in 2017. While these developments seem progressive for a developing country, a literature review

**FIGURE 2****Distribution of Scores of the Top 25% on ASEAN Countries in PISA 2022 Overall**

*Note: The shaded portions in the graph above represent the top 25% of learners in the sample of the population of every ASEAN country's learners in the 2022 PISA, averaging their performance in Math, Reading, and Science.*

from these eras reveals persistent fundamental issues, some dating back to the 1925 Monroe Survey Report—insufficient classrooms, subpar teaching quality, and overburdening teachers with nonteaching tasks.

This report summarizes the initiatives and preliminary findings of EDCOM II in its first year. Ultimately, as the Commission continues its work in the next 2 years, it aims to grasp the scale of these problems, meet them at their very root, and propose policies that could solve them once and for all.

**Some of our most basic education indicators look encouraging.**

In the past decade, Kindergarten participation swelled from only 2.1% in 2013,<sup>2</sup> to 66% in 2021.<sup>3</sup> Elementary participation rate has remained above 95% since the 1970s. Secondary participation improved—going from 65% in the 1980s to 90% in 2015, while our higher education participation rate of 35% is above average when compared against other lower-middle-income countries.

The 1987 Constitution mandates that the education sector receive the biggest proportion of the national budget—and in almost four decades since, government investments in education *have* increased.

In the last 14 years alone, annual spending on education per student has nearly tripled, from Php 7,876 to Php 20,834 (PIDS, 2021). In 2022, education investments reached 3.58% of the GDP, nearing the UNESCO recommendation of 4%. Despite this, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that the country's cumulative expenditure from age 6 to 15 is only at \$11,000, compared to the OECD average of \$75,000 in 2019. Perhaps the only explanation for such a gulf between the optimistic-seeming PIDS numbers and the pessimistic-seeming OECD estimates is this: There is simply that much ground to cover. In other words, though we are still behind now, we are still much better off than in the past.

**Despite numerous efforts to fix all these problems, the vicious cycle continues.**

In the 3 decades between the 2 EDCOMs, we saw the Presidential Commission on Educational Reform (1998), the Third Elementary Education Project (1999), the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (2006), and most recently, Sulong EduKalidad (2020).

Nonetheless, reforms have not taken root.

<sup>2</sup> PSA FLEMMS 2013.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF SEA-PLM Policy Brief 2021, "Harness the potential of early childhood education for long-term benefits on children's learning," based on DepEd 2021 Key Education Statistics.

*Scholars have criticized the sector's inability to implement reforms due to frequent changes in leadership, resistance to change within the government, and the agency's "culture of obeisance" (Bautista et al., 2008)—a polite, if inaccessible, term for a bureaucracy accustomed to jaded compliance.*

This is due to various factors. Scholars have criticized the sector's inability to implement reforms due to frequent changes in leadership, resistance to change within the government, and the agency's "culture of obeisance" (Bautista et al., 2008)—a polite, if inaccessible, term for a bureaucracy accustomed to jaded compliance. On the other hand, we must acknowledge our country's rapid population growth, and how our demand for education rapidly outpaced our means to provide it—a recurring theme since the postwar era (Isidro, 1957).

This challenge is not unique to the Philippines. Many developing countries are confronted by similar challenges when trying to expand access to education. But the universality of this problem does not diminish the harm inflicted on millions of Filipino learners. We must realize that participation rates will be meaningless if our students are unable to add simple numbers and read simple texts, despite having a diploma. This should prompt a turn toward quality, not quantity.

*As we proceed in our work, the Commission understands that genuine solutions require the knowledge and experience of people who are on the ground, in our schools.*

The Philippines has never lacked well-meaning education advocates or willing, passionate teachers. If this problem could be solved overnight, then it would have been solved long ago. It is difficult to identify a problem when everything is a problem—and the ones that confront us are complex, often requiring not just technical solutions or money, but also intense political resolve and cultural shifts. Thus, this second EDCOM has embarked on its mission guided by the following principles:

**Effective diagnosis is a prerequisite for finding adaptive solutions.** Given the urgency of our problem, EDCOM's intention is to go through the legislative process as quickly as possible, and so it frontloads data gathering and consultations to inform proposed legislation. We recruited the country's top minds to support our work. Advisory Council and Standing Committee members come from a broad range of expertises and backgrounds, as the Commission undertakes 90 research projects in partnership with the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) and our best universities. This enables us to put forward policies that are grounded on empirical evidence.

**Addressing multiple issues simultaneously requires prioritization.** At the onset, the Commission conducted consultations, and a thorough evaluation of the most pressing concerns that affect learning outcomes, from early childhood to higher education. Through this, we identified 28 priorities that will promote equitable access while focusing heavily on factors that relate to quality of

education. Within these 28 priorities, the Commission has also agreed to first of all tackle issues in building foundational skills, specifically literacy and numeracy, in Key Stage 1 (K to 3). For year 1 (2023), EDCOM focused on 12 of the most urgent reforms.

**It should not be about finger pointing.** Based on our initial findings, most of these issues have abided for decades, across administrations, compounded by sociocultural realities, and complicated by crisscrossing policies across government. Instead of pointing fingers, our primary intent is to understand the problems, and to cut them at their roots.

**“Learning does not happen at the Central Office.”** This borrows the wisdom of our Advisory Council Member Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, SJ. As we proceed in our work, the Commission understands that genuine solutions require the knowledge and experience of people who are on the ground, in our schools.

We have thus conducted, and will continue to hold, extensive consultations with stakeholders all over the country. In year 1 alone, the findings are informed by 19 hearings, 12 focused group discussions and 23 site visits. This included locating and learning from “positive deviants” in the country, or those that have succeeded in delivering quality education despite facing similar constraints. This was paralleled by the release of green papers that aim to solicit direct inputs from stakeholders and the general public. To date, 114 submissions have been received and considered by the Standing Committees.

**National-level policies are only one of many levers to reform.** Unlike the context faced by EDCOM I, the current architecture of the Philippine education system is already buttressed by many laws and implemented by multiple agencies of government. There remain instances where there is a need to rationalize, amend, or fill gaps

*While the report shares concrete policy recommendations that the Commission has already acted on in the past year—whether in the form of a bill, advocating for budget allocations in the 2024 budget, or by collaborating with the concerned agencies—it also outlines initial policy directions that will be deliberated further in year 2.*

in legislation, but the Commission is also cognizant that there are other levers to implement change. These include budgetary allocations through the annual General Appropriations Act, refinements to implementing guidelines issued by agencies, ordinances passed by local government units, and initiatives of many civil society organizations committed to improving education quality.

As we share the key findings of the Commission we also note the following:

**These are preliminary findings based on available data, which provide initial insight on 12 priority areas.**

We anticipate further refinement of these findings and recommendations in the coming years, culminating in our final report in year 3.

While the report shares concrete policy recommendations that the Commission has already acted on in the past year—whether in the form of a bill, advocating for budget allocations in the 2024 budget, or by collaborating with the concerned agencies—it also outlines initial policy directions that will be deliberated further in year 2.



The report should thus be seen as a snapshot of where we are in our work in EDCOM and as an education system *at this point*. The Commission reserves the right to improve on and update its findings as new data is found in years 2 and 3, and as the concerned agencies act on these concerns.

Our mission would not have been possible without the collaboration of DepEd, CHED, and TESDA. We are grateful for their support as we pursue our mutual goal of improving the quality of education in our country.

**It is crucial to maintain perspective and restraint.** It is easy to be occupied as we enact simpler, symptomatic solutions; but it is imperative that we keep sight of the broader, structural reforms that EDCOM is mandated to address. Strategic focus is thus critical for the Commission to confront the systems-level challenges effectively.

This report confirms that there is an education crisis. The challenges are immense, but the clarity regarding these challenges strengthens our resolve.

**We cannot continue with business as usual.** Business as usual translates to teachers being overburdened with nonteaching tasks and students unable to reach their full potential, among other adverse circumstances. A reimagined approach to education in the Philippines is imperative, and the time to act is now.

**Karol Mark R. Yee, PhD**

Executive Director

EDCOM II



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## Priority Areas

In late January, the Commission began to formulate key Priority Areas that required attention. By March, these Priority Areas had been refined into 28 key items and organized based on the Standing Committees and their respective Sub-committees. Throughout year 1, each Standing Committee and its Sub-committee selected and focused on 12 priority areas, which are highlighted in a distinct color in the table.

Priority Areas	Issues and Imperatives
<b>Early Childhood Care and Development</b>	
1. Nutrition and feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Challenges in governance, implementation, and resourcing of health and nutrition programs</li> <li>▪ Aligning incentives to address challenges / look into quality</li> </ul>
2. Supply-side factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of child development centers to attain universal coverage of ECCD</li> <li>▪ Producing high quality child development workers/teachers</li> <li>▪ Materials and resources for ECE</li> </ul>
3. Demand-side factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding barriers that relate to parental perceptions and engagement in ECCD</li> </ul>
4. Governance and financing of ECCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mechanism of finance</li> <li>▪ Addressing governance challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Education</b>	
5. Learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Textbook development, production, and distribution</li> <li>▪ Using media to enhance learning</li> </ul>
6. Measurement of learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequacy of the assessment system to track learners' progress and inform system reforms</li> <li>▪ Reporting and utilization of assessment results for improving learning outcomes</li> </ul>
7. Curriculum and instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Medium/language of instruction</li> <li>▪ Validation of the K to 10 (and eventually 11 to 12) curriculum toward decongestion, encouraging flexibility and innovation, and reviewing the spiral curriculum</li> </ul>
8. School infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inventory of facilities (public and private)</li> <li>▪ Strategies to address the gaps</li> </ul>
9. Alternative Learning System (ALS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access and delivery</li> <li>▪ Curriculum content, quality, and assessment toward preparing learners for employment</li> </ul>

10. Home and school environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe, secure, conducive, and supportive learning environment</li> <li>▪ Improved mechanisms for partnerships and shared accountability between families, schools, and communities</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Education</b>	
11. Access to quality higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing CHED's regulatory framework to enhance its developmental and regulatory functions</li> <li>▪ Strengthening of academe-industry linkages</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that improved access to higher education is access to quality higher education</li> <li>▪ Enhancing the quality of higher education programs (quality in terms of enhancing learning outcomes and program relevance)</li> </ul>
Quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulating the current Philippine QA system in general and higher education in particular, delineating the government functions and voluntary QA bodies and recommending the governance of QA in education</li> <li>▪ Contextualizing the current Philippine QA system within the QA models/systems of other countries/regions</li> <li>▪ Institutionalizing internal and external quality assurance / quality assurance of academic programs and administrative processes</li> <li>▪ Developing and institutionalizing an empirically grounded horizontal typology and a vertical typology based on the agreed-upon horizontal typology and a review of the prevailing criteria for the grant of autonomous and deregulated status to private higher education institutions (HEIs) and the leveling of state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs)</li> <li>▪ Aligning the learning outcomes of higher education qualifications with the Philippine Qualifications Framework</li> </ul>
12. Efficiency of public and private higher education provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing a framework for the establishment and sustainability of existing HEIs, especially LUCs</li> <li>▪ Clarifying the complementarity principle and developing a framework to guide its implementation to address the substantial challenges faced by private HEIs</li> <li>▪ Building leadership capacity in SUCs and LUCs</li> </ul>

13. Graduate education, research, and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhancing the quality and uptake of graduate education in the country</li> <li>▪ Addressing the constraints to quality research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in research universities</li> <li>▪ Building capacity for research translation into innovations/technologies and supporting S&amp;T parks, start-ups, and social enterprises</li> </ul>
14. Digital transformation and educational technologies (crosscutting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishing the infrastructure for digital transformation, research clouds, and educational technologies</li> <li>▪ Enhancing access to educational technologies and mechanisms for sharing resources</li> <li>▪ Establishing smart campuses aligned with sustainable development goal (SDG) targets</li> </ul>
15. Internationalization of higher education (crosscutting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressing constraints to the internationalization of students and faculty</li> <li>▪ Reviewing the country's transnational education policy in RA 11448</li> <li>▪ Reviewing and addressing the issues related to global rankings</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Education and Development</b>	
16. Alignment of CHED, the PRC, DepEd (including the TEC) on teacher education and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alignment of CHED, the PRC, DepEd on teacher education and development</li> </ul>
17. Preservice education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gaps in preservice training</li> <li>▪ Quality of teacher education institutions</li> <li>▪ Encouraging more students to enter the teaching profession</li> <li>▪ Licensure Exam for Teachers (LET) / licensing of teachers</li> </ul>
18. In-service training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher welfare</li> <li>▪ Training and development of teachers and school heads</li> </ul>
<b>Technical-Vocational Education &amp; Training (TVET) and Lifelong Learning</b>	
19. Needs-based system projecting the demands in workers' upskilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding current and future "middle-skill" needs of the country</li> <li>▪ Understanding the future generation of the Filipino workforce</li> </ul>
20. Industry involvement and investment in upskilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding the labor market outcomes of TVET graduates</li> <li>▪ Encouraging companies to invest in upskilling of workers and offer enterprise-based training and apprenticeship programs</li> <li>▪ Reconsidering rural industry development</li> </ul>

<p>21. Ensuring quality in the provision of TVET</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring quality assurance in TVET</li> <li>▪ Rationalizing TVET provision and support (by TESDA, LGUs, and private TVIs)</li> </ul>
<p>22. Framework for equivalency and recognition of nonformal and informal learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lifelong learning framework</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance and Finance</b></p>	
<p>23. Ensuring seamless and integrated delivery of education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of a coherent plan/road map/vision for the education sector</li> <li>▪ Lack of effective coordination among education agencies toward agreed-upon goals</li> <li>▪ Using measures of quality to ensure attainment of agreed-upon goals</li> </ul>
<p>24. Complementarity between public and private education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of clarity on the government’s primary roles</li> <li>▪ Education delivery strategy informed by public and private absorptive capacity across all levels of education</li> <li>▪ Expanding Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE)</li> </ul>
<p>25. Integrated performance management and accountability system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of integrated ecosystem performance management system where funding is tied to performance versus student outcomes</li> </ul>
<p>26. Efficiency and equity in financing, resource mobilization, and delivery of education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efficiency in education finance and resource mobilization</li> <li>▪ Equity in the delivery of education and the extent that the needs of vulnerable sectors are addressed</li> </ul>
<p>27. Decentralization and participatory governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highly centralized governance structure results in limited participation of local government and stakeholders in education governance, and lack of agility and innovation in the system</li> <li>▪ Participation of education stakeholders (students, parents, community, NGOs, CSOs, business sector and industries, LGUs, NGAs, and development partners) in education governance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Crosscutting</b></p>	
<p>28. Connectedness of learner pathways throughout the system</p>	

# Year 1 Findings

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

# ECCD: The Critical Window for Holistic Development

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**Early childhood care and development (ECCD) is a critical component in the holistic development of children aged 0 to 8 years**, encompassing rapid physical, mental, and socioemotional growth (UNESCO, 2023). Prioritizing ECCD is essential for laying the foundation for lifelong learning, reducing inequities, and positively influencing future life outcomes. A substantial portion of the Philippine population falls within the early childhood stage. As of 2020, the country's population stood at 109,033,245, with 18.4%, or 20,030,089, being children aged 0 to 8 years; and 10.2%, or 11,069,479, falling in the 0 to 4 years age bracket. Given that these children make up nearly a fifth of the population, emphasizing the importance of ECCD has become a top priority in the nation.

*This critical window is widely acknowledged as the most strategic and efficient means to address persistent inequities (Nores, 2020; World Bank, 2013).*

During these formative years, a comprehensive array of services encompassing education, care, health, nutrition, and social protection (Zubairi & Rose, 2017) is essential to bolster a child's growth in 4 pivotal domains: physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional (World Bank, 2013). Recognizing the outsized influence these early years exert on future life outcomes—such as reducing school dropout rates, enhancing learner achievement, boosting labor market participation, and diminishing the likelihood of poverty, this critical window is widely acknowledged as the most strategic and efficient means to address persistent inequities (Nores, 2020; World Bank, 2013).

Consistent with the recommendations of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II), it is emphasized that young children aged 0 to 8 years require proper nutrition, early education, and responsive caregiving to unfold their full potential. The study on ECCD by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) (2023) identifies key program components crucial for ensuring that each child is well-prepared for success in life: (a) access to high-quality early education, (b) adequate health care, nutrition, and responsive caregiving, and (c) a safe and secure environment.

The Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 outlines a strategy framework to enhance education and lifelong learning, with a focus on promoting human and social development (see Figure 1). In Outcome 1, which aims to achieve quality, inclusive, adaptive, resilient, and future-ready basic education for all, a key initiative involves enhancing the ECCD curriculum, particularly focusing on the first 1,000 days of life. Additional strategies to attain this outcome include ensuring the comprehensive implementation of ECCD services, providing capacity building for child development teachers, and introducing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions in early childhood.

**FIGURE 1**

**Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 Strategy Framework to Improve Education and Lifelong Learning**



<p><b>Quality, inclusive, adaptive, resilient, and future-ready basic education for all achieved</b></p>	<p><b>Globally competitive and inclusive TVET and higher education, and improved research output attained for a broader knowledge economy</b></p>	<p><b>Governance for human capital development improved</b></p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) curriculum</li> <li>Develop and implement catch-up programs to address learning losses</li> <li>Ensure access to quality learning resources</li> <li>Improve competencies of teachers</li> <li>Strengthen school-based feeding program to address malnutrition</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen private-public complementarity in the provision of quality basic education</li> <li>Adopt modern learning spaces</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implement future-ready technical-vocational education and training (TVET) programs</li> <li>Implement structural reforms in local universities and colleges (LUCs) to strengthen linkages with TVET communities</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase involvement/participation of industry and private sector in TVET</li> <li>Improve enterprise-based training and bolster microcredentials</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue transnational knowledge cocreation linkages with HEIs</li> <li>Optimize the roles of universities as innovation hubs and incubation centers</li> <li>Establish regional university systems</li> <li>Provide more research-oriented scholarships and grants</li> <li>Effectively implement online and blended learning modalities</li> <li>Develop alternative assessment and certification methods</li> <li>Improve student support to ensure student success</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonize the trifocalized system of education for lifelong learning</li> <li>Strengthen school-based management</li> <li>Develop and improve learning materials in line with international standards and trends</li> <li>Rationalize workload of teachers</li> <li>Design a higher education career system</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with independent third-party institutions in assessing and monitoring the progress of students' proficiency across all levels</li> </ul>



*“What is one of the best ways a country can boost shared prosperity, promote inclusive economic growth, expand equitable opportunity, and end extreme poverty? The answer is simple: Invest in early childhood development.”*

—World Health Organization, 2018

*For ECCD, in particular, research suggests that every \$1 invested in the early years could yield returns as high as \$17 for the most disadvantaged children (Zubairi & Rose, 2017).*

**The Philippines has demonstrated its long-standing commitment to ECCD through legislative measures.**

From a policy standpoint, the rationale is hard to dispute: investing in the crucial early years not only enhances outcomes in both the short and long term, but also diminishes the social costs associated with later interventions (Nores, 2020). Moreover, due to the early nature of these investments, the returns are significantly higher. For ECCD, in particular, research suggests that every \$1 invested in the early years could yield returns as high as \$17 for the most disadvantaged children (Zubairi & Rose, 2017).

The Philippines has demonstrated a dedicated commitment to advancing human development by enacting legislation that supports ECCD. Dating back to 1978, Presidential Decree No. 1567, also known as the Barangay Day Care Center Law of 1978, institutionalized the establishment of day care centers in every barangay in the Philippines catering to Filipino children aged 0 to 6 years.

*Sec 2. That a day care shall be established in every barangay with at least one hundred (100) family heads*

*Sec 3. Said day care will look after the nutritional, social, and mental development of children from ages 2 to 5 when parents are unable to*

*Sec 4. Said day care will be staffed with one (1) female day care nursery worker*

*Sec 5. Said day care should be accredited by the Bureau of Family and Child Welfare of the DSWD.*

(Presidential Decree No. 1567, 1978)

Republic Act (RA) No. 6972, also known as the Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act of 1990, endorsed the directive to establish day care centers in every barangay under the direct supervision of local government units (LGUs) in coordination with the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD). According to the findings from the 1991 EDCOM, early childhood education was primarily accessed by children of higher socioeconomic status. In response, EDCOM recommended government support for ECCD centers, especially those in rural and economically depressed areas, to ensure equal opportunities for ECCD (Congressional Commission on Education, 1991).

This recommendation received further backing decades later through RA 8980, known as the ECCD Act of 2000. This legislation institutionalized a National Early Learning Framework to provide guidance for the implementation of ECCD services across the country. Later, RA 10410, or the Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013, delineated the first stage of early childhood (from conception to 4 years of age) under the purview of the ECCD Council. The ECCD Council, currently comprised of entities such as the Department of Education (DepED), the Department of Health (DOH), the National Nutrition Council (NNC), the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), the DSWD, and the ECCD Secretariat, along with a private ECCD partner, oversees this responsibility. The entire early childhood stage was comprehensively addressed with the passage of RA 10157, also known as the Kindergarten Education Act of 2012, which, a year prior, mandated compulsory kindergarten education for all 5-year-old Filipino children.

*Early childhood education is widely recognized as fundamental to building “more efficient and effective education systems” (UNICEF, 2019c: 6), with current studies highlighting the importance of at least 2 years of free preprimary education (Zubairi & Rose, 2017).*

Early childhood education is widely recognized as fundamental to building “more efficient and effective education systems” (UNICEF, 2019: 6), with current studies highlighting the importance of at least 2 years of free preprimary education (Zubairi & Rose, 2017). This recognition is based on research indicating that engagement in preprimary education can serve as a preventative measure against special education needs, grade repetition, early parenthood, and involvement in delinquent behaviors leading to incarceration—outcomes that would otherwise incur substantial costs for the government to address or support (Center for High Impact Philanthropy, 2017). In light of these findings, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target ensures that “all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education” by 2030.

The Philippines legislates early childhood education as part of the basic and early childhood care and development system through RA 10410, RA 9155, RA 10157, and RA 10533 (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1**  
**Philippine Basic and Early Childhood Education System**



ECCD Programs (Voluntary)				Basic Education (Mandatory)			
	Early Stimulation	Preschool					
Center-based program	Infant-Toddler Early Development	Pre-K1	Pre-K2	Kindergarten	Primary (G1-6)	Junior Secondary (G7-10)	Senior Secondary (G11-12)
Age group	0-2 yos	3 yos	4 yos	5 yos	6-11 yos	12-16 yos	17-18 yos
Duration of program	1 hour, once a week, over 10 months	2-2.5 hours daily, over 10 months	2-2.5 hours daily, over 10 months	203 school days			
Responsible govt. agency	ECCD Council; LGUs			DepEd			
Legislation	RA 10410			RA 9155; RA 10157; RA 10533			

Source: *Early Childhood Education Advisory Services and Analytics (ECE ASA) Report* (World Bank, 2023)

Following the national policies that established ECCD in the Philippines, Filipino children aged 0 to 4 have—on paper—access to ECCD programs and services through 2 primary avenues (see Table 2). First, center-based programs encompass different facilities, including national child development centers (NCDCs), child development centers (CDCs), and child-minding centers. Second, home-based programs offer diverse options, such as neighborhood-based or community-based playgroups, family child care programs, parent education, and home visits, as outlined in RA 8980.



**TABLE 2**  
**Types of Public ECCD Programs in the Philippines**

Type of Program	2014–2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
 <b>Center Based (Public Only)</b>	<b>Number of Established Centers</b>				
<b>National child development center</b>	600	684	777	809	854
<b>Day care center / Child development center</b>	74,189	43,480	40,957	51,042	34,043
<b>Child-minding center</b>		112	109	n.a.	5,978
 <b>Home Based (Public Only)</b>		<b>Number of Documented Programs</b>			
<b>Neighborhood-based playgroups (supervised neighborhood play)</b>		n.a.	833	n.a.	5,345

*Note: The National Child Development Center (NCDC) is the community-based flagship program of the ECCD Council, and serves as a center-based venue for the delivery of integrated ECCD resources and services (ECCD Council, 2024).*

*Source: Early Childhood Education Advisory Services (ECE ASA) Report (World Bank, 2023)*

Currently, the largest population of 0 to 4 children engaged in public ECCD programs in the country predominantly frequents day care centers, or child development centers. However, a decrease in participation can be observed from 2020 to 2021, a trend that can be attributed to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**ECCD-IS and NETIS Data on Enrollment in Public CDCs**  
**for SY 2019-2020 to SY 2022-2023**

Age Group	2020 Population (PSA Census)	Enrollment in Public Institutions				Average Enrollment Rate (%)
		SY 2019-20	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	
<b>0-2</b>	6,554,582	No data	431	265	219	Below 0.0%
<b>3-4</b>	4,514,897	697,367	838,223	1,262,672	592,614	19%
<b>Total (0-4)</b>	11,069,479	697,367	838,654	1,262,937	592,833	8%
<b>of which NCR</b>	1,279,827	7,409	86,568	110,305	26,471	5%

Note: Early Childhood Care and Development Information System (ECCD-IS) is a database operated by the DSWD that tracks all children receiving ECCD services from the department. NCDC Enrollment Tracking and Information System (NETIS) is a database operated by the ECCD Council that tracks existing NCDCs, enrollment, LGU partners, and NCDC child development teachers (CDTs).

Source: Early Childhood Education Advisory Services and Analytics (ECE ASA) Report (World Bank, 2023).

*“Good nutrition can affect how young children fare in school. Research has shown that effective early childhood nutrition interventions lower the age of school start, improve reading comprehension and nonverbal cognitive ability test results, and boost the chance of earning more later in life.”*

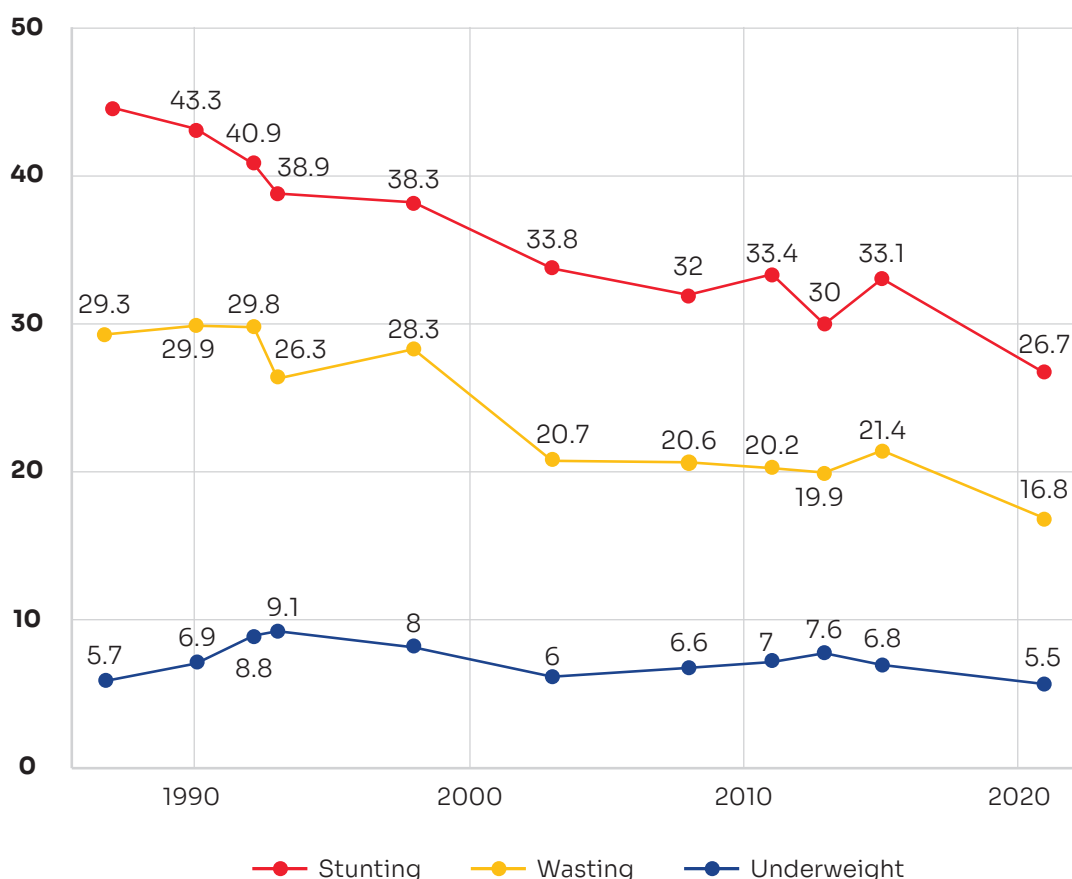
— Valerie Gilbert T. Ulep, Lyle Daryl D. Casas, and Suzy M. Tapanan, “Starting Strong: Why Early Childhood Care and Development Matters in the Philippines,” Policy Notes, PIDS-EDCOM II (2022)



In addition to addressing early childhood education needs, recent policy recommendations advocate for investments in health and nutrition, particularly emphasizing early stimulation from conception through early childhood. Noteworthy among these initiatives are RA 11148, also known as the Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act, or the First 1,000 Days (F1KD) Law of 2018; and RA 11037, the Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act of 2017. These legislative measures were enacted with the explicit goal of addressing nutrition needs in the country, fortuitously occurring just a few years prior to the onset of the pandemic. The EDCOM II-IDInsight Policy Brief reveals the triple burden of malnutrition (i.e., undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, and overnutrition) in the Philippines. Current prevalence rates for under-5 stunting, wasting, and underweight stand at 26.7%, 16.8%, and 5.5%, respectively; and 1 in 5 children is born with low birth weight (LBW) (see Figure 2).

## FIGURE 2

### Malnutrition Trends in the Philippines for Children Under Age Five, 1987–2021



Source: UNICEF (n.d.) for years 1987–2015; DOST–FNRI for year 2021

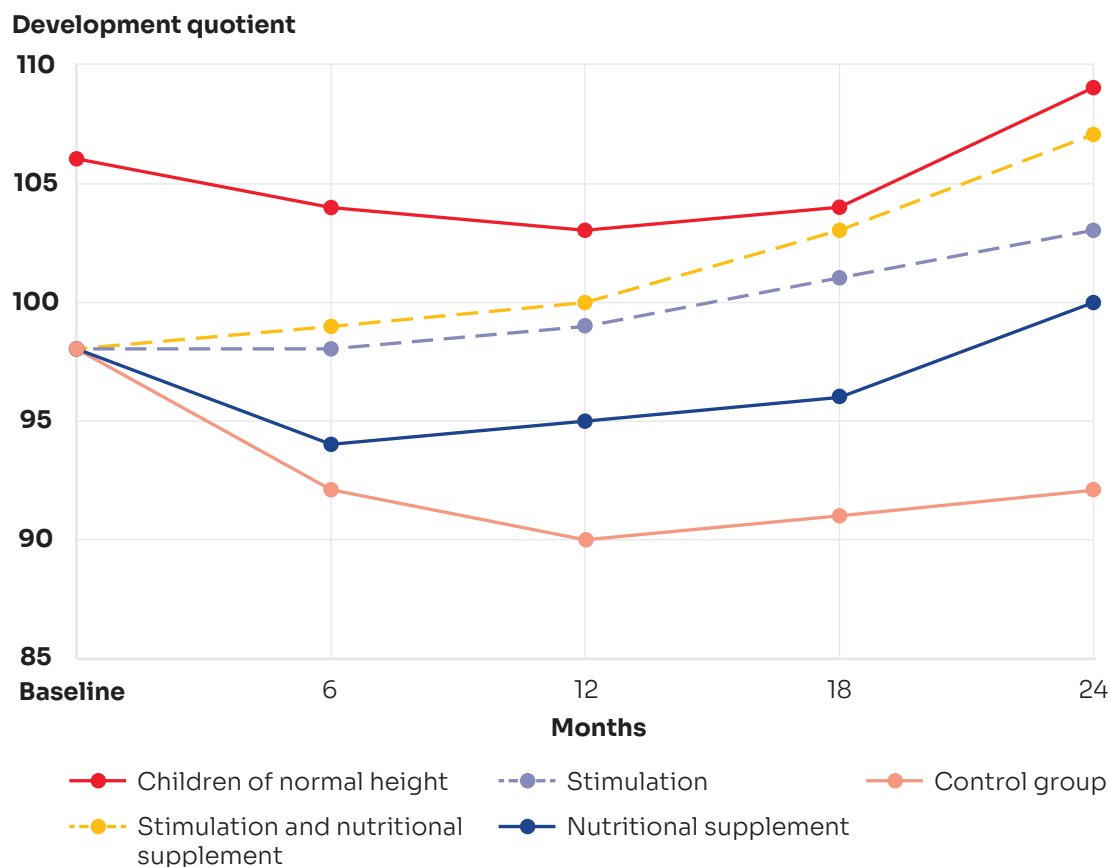
The significance of proper nutrition during the initial 1,000 days of life cannot be overstated, as it plays a pivotal role in ensuring optimal child development. Moreover, investing in nutrition “produces learners who are likely to complete school, reach their learning potential, and live productive lives” (Ulep et al., 2023).

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## Priority 1: Nutrition and Feeding

The impact of nutrition and feeding on the cognitive, physical, and social and emotional development of children is strongly associated with their ability to become receptive to learning, and to form positive relationships with the people around them (Sorhaindo & Feinstein, 2006; Sridhar, 2008). As highlighted in the policy brief published by IDinsight and EDCOM II (2024), it emphasizes that “inadequate nutrition during this period leads to irreversible effects on physical and cognitive growth, as well as long-term consequences for future educational attainment, earning ability, and overall quality of life.”


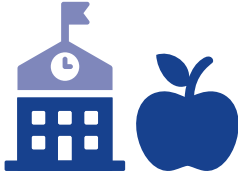

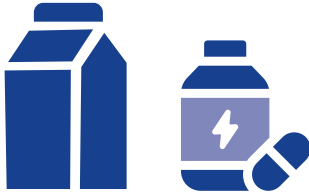
Data from the World Bank show that children who are nutritionally at-risk have the potential to bridge developmental gaps and cultivate resilience through early interventions in stimulation and proper nutrition, as demonstrated in a comprehensive 2-year study of stunted children in Jamaica (Grantham-McGregor et al., 1997). The results of the study highlight the critical link between nutrition and education especially in early childhood. Beyond this critical time frame, the adverse consequences are enduring and pose challenges for later compensatory measures in childhood (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 15).

**FIGURE 3****Effects of Early Childhood Supplementation With and Without Stimulation on Later Development in Stunted Jamaican Children**

Source: Grantham-McGregor et al., 1997

While initial interventions in accordance with Philippine laws align with global standards (see Table 4), there exists a notable gap in coverage, and the implementation remains fragmented across various agencies and between national and local governments.

**TABLE 4**  
**Legislative Coverage for Nutrition Policies**

0–6 Months	6–24 Months	3–5 Years Old	5 Years Old
<p><b>RA 11148</b> of 2018: <b>First 1,000 Days Law</b></p>		<p><b>RA 11037</b> of 2018: <b>Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act</b></p>	
 <p><b>Breastfeeding and complementary feeding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ nutrition counseling and provision of nutritious food and meals at the facility for mothers;</li> <li>▪ provision of micronutrient supplements including iron, folic acid, vitamin A, and other micronutrients deemed necessary;</li> <li>▪ dietary supplementation of age-appropriate and nutrient-dense quality complementary food</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Supplementary feeding:</b> 1 fortified meal for at least 120 days for children in day care centers</p>	 <p><b>School-based feeding:</b> for severely wasted and wasted students in public schools (K to 6)</p>	
<p>Only about half of the children aged 0–5 months (54.9%) were exclusively breastfed in 2018 (FNRI, 2018).</p>	<p>Only 13% of children aged 6–23 months met the MAD in 2018; poor children were deficient in protein (Jaquier et al., 2020).</p>	 <p>This includes a <b>milk feeding</b> program and micronutrient supplements.</p>	

Abbreviations: MAD = minimum acceptable diet, FNRI = Food and Nutrition Research Institute






Furthermore, malnutrition poses a hindrance to a child's complete physical and developmental potential. Chronic undernutrition, leading to stunting (low height for age), is associated with enduring impacts on cognitive function and learning performance (Hoddinott et al., 2013). An estimated 3.7 million children may not have attained their full growth potential, likely facing challenges in achieving academic success. The period spanning from pregnancy to the first year of a child's life is critical for the development of sensory pathways (vision and hearing), language, and higher cognitive functions, reaching their optimal levels during this time frame (Kliegman et al., 2020).

Consequently, significant investments in early interventions for maternal and child nutrition are imperative to enhance student performance and, ultimately, cultivate a robust and skilled workforce for the nation (IDinsight & EDCOM II, 2024; Ulep et al., 2023; Akseer et al., 2022; Fink et al., 2016). The benefits of investing in nutrition in young children can increase school completion by a year, and increase their earning potential as adults by 5% to 50% (Walters et al., 2016).

While there have been moderate improvements in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as zero hunger and good health and wellbeing through health and nutrition interventions combating malnutrition in the country, significant challenges still remain in quality education, with the trend remaining stagnant in access to quality early childhood development, care, and preprimary education (see Figure 4) (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2022; United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2023).

**FIGURE 4****Philippine SDG Targets for Goal 2: Zero Hunger**

 <b>GOAL 2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE</b>					
Goals/Targets/Indicators		Baseline	Latest	Target <sup>1/</sup>	Data Source Agency
<b>Target 2.1</b>	<b>By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round</b>				
2.1.1.p1	Proportion of households meeting 100% recommended energy intake	<b>31.7</b> 2013	<b>19.5</b> 2019	<b>45.5</b> 2030	Updating of the nutritional status of Filipino children and other population groups, PDRI/ENNS, FNRI-DOST
<b>Target 2.2</b>	<b>By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons</b>				
2.2.1	Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age	<b>33.4</b> 2015	<b>26.7</b> 2021	<b>24.9</b> 2030	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
2.2.2	Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)				
2.2.2.1	Prevalence of malnutrition for children under 5 years <-2 SD from the median of the WHO CGS (wasting)	<b>7.1</b> 2015	<b>5.5</b> 2021	<b>3.7</b> 2030	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
2.2.2.2	Prevalence of malnutrition for children under 5 years <+2 SD from the median of the WHO CGS (overweight)	<b>3.9</b> 2015	<b>3.9</b> 2021	<b>No increase</b> 2030	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
2.2.s1	Prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies (vitamin A; iron)				
2.2.s1.1	Vitamin A deficient				
	6 months to 5 years old	<b>20.4</b> 2013	<b>14.0</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
	Pregnant	<b>9.0</b> 2013	<b>2.8</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
	Lactating	<b>5.0</b> 2013	<b>2.2</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
	60 years old and up	<b>3.0</b> 2013	<b>0.9</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST

Goals/Targets/Indicators	Baseline	Latest	Target <sup>1/</sup>	Data Source Agency	
2.2.s1.2	Anemia				
	6 months to 5 years old	<b>13.8</b> 2013	<b>12.5</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
	Pregnant	<b>24.6</b> 2013	<b>19.9</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
	Lactating	<b>16.7</b> 2013	<b>11.6</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
	60 years old and up	<b>20.8</b> 2013	<b>16.9</b> 2019	<b>0.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST
2.2.s2	Prevalence of exclusively breastfed children 0 to 5 months old	<b>48.8</b> 2015	<b>60.1</b> 2021	<b>100.0</b> 2023	ENNS/NNS, FNRI-DOST

**The SDG Watch is compiled by the Philippine Statistics Authority as the official repository of SDG indicators in the Philippines per PSA Board Resolution No. 09, Series of 2017.**

**More statistical information on the Philippine SDGs can be accessed at <http://psa.gov.ph/sdg>.**

Note: <sup>1/</sup>Based on the preliminary 2030 nationally determined numerical targets for the SDGs identified through the conduct of consultation and validation workshops with both government and nongovernment stakeholders of NEDA, in partnership with PIDS, held last 2019.

Abbreviations: ENNS/NNS

Expanded National Nutrition Survey/National Nutrition Survey

FNRI-DOST

Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology

PDRI

Philippine Dietary Reference Intakes

Source: SDG Watch (PSA, 2023)

EDCOM II is committed to addressing these ECCD challenges by extending support to different ECCD stakeholders in reaching the 2030 SDG targets. Presently, the Commission has identified 2 main issues in nutrition and feeding in the Philippines.









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Issue: Challenges in governance, implementation, and resourcing impede the efficient monitoring, evaluation, and successful implementation of crucial health and nutrition programs in the Philippines.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

The Commission has observed that the Philippines is allocating resources to the right initiatives, but the implementation is marked by fragmentation based on the numerous meetings, consultations, research, and site visits conducted throughout the year. The DSWD, NNC, DOH, and DepEd are just a few national government agencies (NGAs) that are implementing health and nutrition programs in the country (see Table 5).

**TABLE 5**  
**Nutrition Programs Across NGAs**

National Government Agencies	Programs	Children						Women			
		0m-1m	2m-6m	6m-2y	2y-3y	3y-5y	5 yrs (K)	6y-12y (G1-6)	Pregnant	Lactating	Reproductive age
 Department of Health (DOH)	First 1,000 Days (FIKD)	Promotion of Early and Exclusive Breastfeeding									
		Promotion of Kangaroo Mother Care		Preterm and LBW babies							
	Philippine Integrated Management of Severe Acute Malnutrition (PMAM)	RUTF Supplementation	SAM children								
		Micronutrient Supplements	SAM children								
Deworming		SAM children									
 National Nutrition Council (NNC)	Tutok Kainan	Supplementary Feeding of Mothers							NAR priority		
		Complementary Feeding of Infants and Children			NAR priority						
		Nutrition Education & Messaging								With 0y-2y old children	
 Department of Education (DepEd)	School- Based Feeding Program									Wasted and severely wasted	
 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)	Supplementary Feeding Program					Only in supervised neighborhood play or day care					

Note: Abbreviations: LBW = low birth weight, m = month(s), NAR = nutritionally at-risk, RUTF = ready-to-use therapeutic food, SAM = severely acute malnourished, m = months, y = years

Legend: ■ subset as specified ■ all

Supplementary feeding programs are the most common nutrition-specific intervention across NGAs, but implementation is fragmented across target beneficiaries. In the context of the DSWD, the agency allocates funds to LGUs for the implementation of a supplementary feeding program to sustain the optimal nutrition status of young children through regular feeding and milk distribution. According to the 2023 National Expenditure Program (NEP), Php 3.1 billion was allocated for feeding, Php 36 million was allocated for milk distribution, and the rest of the budget was allocated for administrative costs. Hot meals are prepared according to the recommendation of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) to meet the daily nutritional needs of Filipino children. Nevertheless, the scope of this program is limited to approximately 1.8 million 3- to 4-year-old children enrolled in public day care centers, or CDCs, as well as those in supervised neighborhood play areas. As of 2020, there are 11,069,479, falling in the 0–4 age bracket.

**The Commission has also noted the need for better targeting mechanisms in identifying beneficiaries across nutrition programs to effectively manage resources** based on the technical meetings and consultations with the identified government agencies. To ensure the long-term and sustainable impact of nutrition services, target beneficiaries need to be identified through accurate monitoring and reporting of data from all concerned agencies and to explore nutrition programs beyond feeding.

The DepEd School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) provides hot meals or nutritious food products and milk to stunted and wasted Kindergarten to Grade 6 and special education (SPED) learners. The FY 2024 budget for school feeding more than doubled from Php 5.68 billion to Php 11.71 billion. DepEd justified the increase as needed to extend the feeding days by 100 days for a total of 220 days in light of their experience that learners fall back to becoming wasted or severely wasted during the school break.

This proposal goes beyond the mandate of DepEd under RA 11037, which states that “DepED shall implement a school-based feeding program for undernourished public school children from kindergarten to grade six (6): Provided, that the Program shall include the provision of at least one (1) fortified meal to all undernourished public elementary school children for a period of not less than one hundred twenty (120) days in a year.”

DepEd submission to EDCOM II (dated October 18, 2023) reveals that only about 23% of learners experience setbacks during the summer break, with a variation of 15% to 30% for the years 2016–2020. If the objective is to assist these learners, DepEd could consider directing additional feeding efforts exclusively to those who fall back or repeat their malnutrition status at the start of the school year. Utilizing the upper limit of the range defined by DepEd, the target would be 30% of severely wasted K to 6 and SPED populations for an additional 90 days, amounting to approximately Php 1.58 billion. This would bring the total to Php 8.6 billion instead of the initially proposed Php 11.71 billion by DepEd.

Furthermore, in the Amendments to Special Provisions of Committee Report on House Bill (HB) No. 8980 for Vol. No. I-A, p. 198, the feeding program includes stunted and severely stunted learners. However, research indicates that feeding has a limited impact on addressing stunting in school-age children (Yussif et al., 2022; Demilew & Nigussie, 2020; Kwabla et al., 2018). The PIDS Discussion Paper Series No. 2016-05 also reported that there were inaccurate measurements of nutrition variables and documentation of the SBFP in all three feeding phases (Tabunda & Angeles-Agdeppa, 2016).

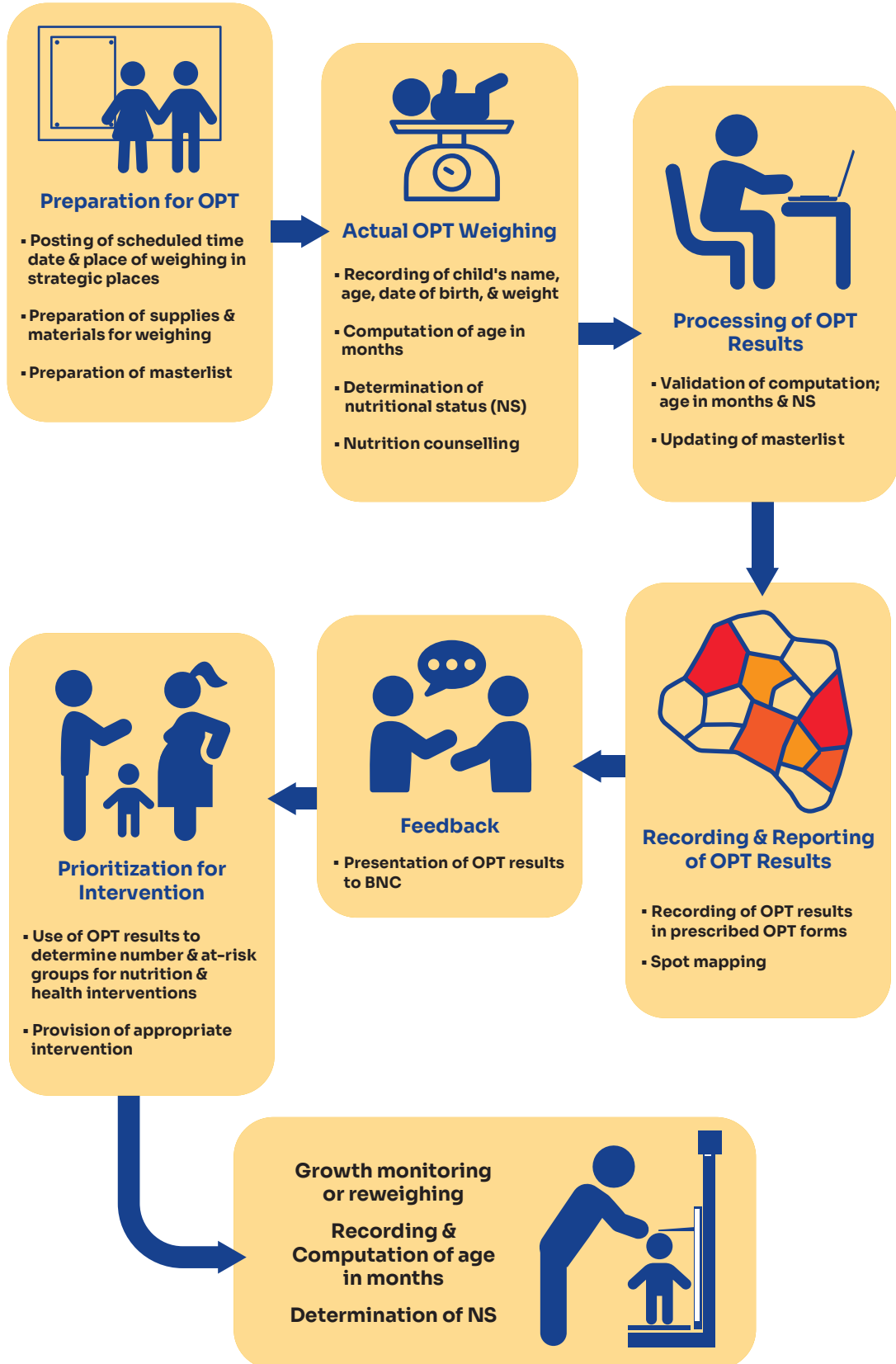
On the other hand, the NNC conducts Operation Timbang (OPT) Plus annually to identify and locate 0- to 59-month-old malnourished children through measuring the weight and height of each child in the barangays. The number of children in each barangay is determined using population census data, and a dedicated team, composed of the rural health midwife, the barangay nutrition scholar (BNS), barangay council members, barangay health workers (BHWs), and child development workers (CDWs) is responsible for collecting height and weight measurements for the children in their community. This comprehensive approach provides an accurate overview of the nutritional status of the community, facilitating the prioritization of health and nutrition interventions. This data source could be utilized by concerned agencies as an alternative to estimates based on universal datasets.





*The Commission has observed that the Philippines is allocating resources to the right initiatives, but the implementation is marked by fragmentation.*

**FIGURE 5**  
**OPT Plus Procedure**



Source: National Nutrition Council (NNC) Operation Timbang Plus

**Despite being members of the National Nutrition Council (NNC), which has outlined a program for the FIKD, the NGAs operate individual programs without effective synergy, resulting in poor coordination.** The monitoring and evaluation processes encounter challenges due to a bottom-up data collection approach using pen-and-paper reports, leading to difficulties in collating and summarizing data. In response, efforts are underway to develop a National Nutrition Information System aimed at enhancing the efficiency of monitoring and evaluating nutrition programs.

The implementation of Tutok Kainan, a dietary supplementation program for the FIKD developed by the NNC, is currently undergoing devolution and relies significantly on local government backing. Due to the absence of a prescribed budget percentage allocation for nutrition in LGUs, the decision to prioritize addressing early childhood undernutrition in a given area rests with local chief executives. Although the DOH and the NNC provide technical support to LGUs in diminishing the stunting rate, there is a lack of a well-defined, comprehensive package of interventions for LGUs.

**The Commission has also observed that confusion stemming from identifying the oversight agency has led to implementation challenges.**

Nutrition programs in the Philippines rely on the coordinated work of LGUs under the oversight of DOH. Through RA 11148 (2018), the DOH is responsible for implementing the FIKD Program in coordination with the NNC, the Department of Agriculture (DA), and LGUs. The EDCOM II-IDInsight Policy Brief (2024) identifies the lack of consistency and implementation challenges in the following areas: staffing constraints (i.e., insufficient number of BHWs, BNSs, and nutrition action officers), resource limitations, knowledge gaps, commitment and advocacy, lack of monitoring data, and legal and policy ambiguity.

## Nutrition Initiatives from Concerned NGAs

**The DSWD allocates funds to LGUs overseeing the implementation of the supplementary feeding program.** Regional procurement is employed to facilitate the efficient preparation and distribution of hot meals and milk to CDCs. The DSWD has actively advocated for a supplementary budget to enhance the unit cost of nutrition commodities.

**The NNC assumes a crucial role in addressing the prevalent challenges of malnutrition and food insecurity across various provinces of the nation.**

It has systematically identified the provinces grappling with the highest rates of malnutrition and food insecurity. In an effort to tackle these issues head-on, the council has actively engaged the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to leverage its influence in mobilizing LGUs within their respective jurisdictions. It has also extended technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation to assist local nutrition committees in their endeavors.

**The DOH continues to address nutrition deficiencies in the country in coordination with the LGUs.** The DOH reported the improvements in the nutrition status of the following (DOST-FNRI, 2021):

- An increase in the exclusive breastfeeding rate for infants 0 to 5.9 months from 48.8% in 2015 to 60.1% in 2021
- Reaching the 2016 Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition target of <40% in the prevalence of anemia among pregnant women (19.9%) and lactating women (11.6%)
- A decrease in vitamin A deficiency in children 6 months to 5 years of age from 20.4% in 2013 to 14% in 2019

**DepEd continues to address undernutrition among school-aged children.**

In 2024, it will expand the duration of the school-based feeding program from 120 days to 220 days in order to reduce the number of Kindergarten to Grade 6 students falling back to underweight nutritional status during the summer break.

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## Issue: The lack of institutionalization of effective practices at the national level hinders equitable access and opportunities in LGU practices for health and nutrition.

Despite facing challenges in governance, implementation and resource allocation for health and nutrition programs, a number of LGUs have successfully reduced their stunting rates by delivering a comprehensive and convergent array of services. The proactive identification of children facing severe undernutrition, extensive information dissemination through educational campaigns, the establishment of barangay communal gardens, and other innovative measures demonstrate a commendable level of multisectoral collaboration within communities. Regrettably, these noteworthy practices lack institutionalization, with the most impactful initiatives for reducing undernutrition originating organically from grassroots efforts rather than being officially endorsed by the national government.

One exemplary practice by local governments is the creation of ordinances and resolutions to support nutrition programs. The province of Iloilo stands out with its Ordinance No. 2017-163, which promotes organic vegetable farming “Laswa sa Lamesa” in every household (Provincial Ordinance No. 2017-163, 2018). This ordinance meticulously outlines administrative responsibilities at various government levels—from provincial to municipal, barangay to household—as well as spanning across sectors such as agriculture, health, and nutrition. This approach ensures the provision of technical assistance, funding mechanisms, penalties, and incentives necessary for the effective execution of the program. Many local nutrition committees employ the strategy of aligning the nutrition budget with the annual investment plans of the local government concurrently. By anchoring the nutrition program to the economic and developmental objectives of the LGU, the city or municipal nutrition committee garners increased support from local leaders.

## Excerpt from the EDCOM II-IDInsight Policy Brief

### Nutrition initiatives at the local level can also be key drivers for improving nutrition outcomes.

Rural health units that were awarded the Green Banner for Nutrition in 2023 demonstrate best practices for reducing undernutrition and stunting among young children. These cases demonstrate that improvements in stunting and undernutrition can be addressed through community responsiveness with a comprehensive nutrition intervention package, an allotment of approximately 1% of the municipality's general fund to finance the maternal health and nutrition programs, active child finding, and an effective municipal nutrition committee. A case in Western Visayas with a prevalence of wasting among 0- to 5-year-old children was at 5.45%, or more than 500 children in the municipal population in 2015. To address stunting in their municipality, innovative and locally funded programs were implemented.

- **Mother's class:** Scheduled every third Monday of the month to teach pregnant mothers about proper nutrition, breastfeeding, and food preparation
- **TokSAM:** Active finding and barangay mapping of children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) through house-to-house visits to properly prioritize undernourished children in the nutrition program
- **Barangay-Initiated Feeding:** Nutribun and one-egg-a-day for undernourished children 6 to 59 months of age for 180 days
- **24/7 birthing clinics** in strategic locations
- **Barangay Communal Garden:** Planting of vegetables, herbs, fruits, and other nutritious plants for nutritionally at-risk (NAR) pregnant women and children
- **Gatas Mo, Kabuhi Ko:** Simultaneous breastmilk donor drives of lactating mothers in the community for preterm and high-risk infants in neonatal intensive care units
- **Nutrivention:** Creation of nutritious recipes from locally available and low-cost ingredients by BHWs and BNSs through an annual contest where only one vegetable will be used as an ingredient for an appetizer, side dish, main dish, and dessert

From 2015 to 2022, stunting among children in the community decreased from 5.45% to 0.2%. A part of this drop may be attributed to these local initiatives. Even when facing staffing constraints such as a fulltime local nutrition action officer, these municipalities were able to drastically improve the nutrition status of their women and children. This case highlights the role of local governments in improving nutrition outcomes by adopting localized on-the-ground efforts. Exemplary nutrition models can be replicated and scaled up across LGUs.



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## Recommendations

### **Study the equitable allocation of resources for health and nutrition**

**interventions.** Due to the unequal and insufficient allocation of funding among LGUs, exploring different financing options may contribute to facilitating the seamless delivery of ECCD programs within an LGU. Noteworthy findings from the EDCOM II ECCD consultation in Iloilo province (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 17) indicate that rural health units have demonstrated the viability of allocating a mere 1% of the LGU's budget to effectively implement maternal and child health and nutrition programs. Furthermore, there is a need to identify better targeting mechanisms for nutritionally at-risk children to create a long-term and sustainable impact of health and nutrition intervention programs. Concerned agencies must have a consensus on the coverage of the nutrition intervention programs that is grounded in reliable sources of data to strengthen the cost-effectiveness of each health and nutrition intervention program and to focus on the beneficiaries that need the interventions the most, especially in lower-income municipalities. Supporting priority targeting mechanisms such as the OPT Plus can aid in validating data used by concerned agencies. The annual results of the OPT Plus need to be communicated strategically, disseminated widely across all concerned agencies, and used as a basis for nutrition action plans and the identification of priority beneficiaries in each local community, especially for 0- to 59-month-old children. Prioritizing the equitable distribution of resources can ensure that each child has access to health and nutrition interventions that are critical to early childhood care and development.

### **Find possible complementarities of the DSWD's Pantawid Pamilyang**

**Pilipino Program (4Ps) and the Food Stamp Program (FSP).** The DSWD has numerous programs for poverty alleviation and child protection. While the 4Ps has undoubtedly played a pivotal role in indirectly enhancing maternal health and child nutrition through conditionalities such as prenatal checkups and attendance at CDCs for 3- to 4-year-old children, the Third Wave Impact Evaluation of 4Ps notes "the lack of strong positive impact on stunting as well as birth weight." This could be attributed to the lack of provision for maternal health care services in the program (Orbeta Jr. et al., 2021).



The introduction of a new FSP offers a strategic opportunity for bolstering the implementation of DSWD programs and fostering improved coordination among NGAs. Recognizing that the challenge of nutrition demands a multisectoral solution, the concurrent operation of 4Ps and the FSP holds promise for addressing the intricacies of maternal and child health and nutrition comprehensively.

In response to EDCOM II's ECCD green paper on nutrition and feeding (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 15), the Jollibee Group Foundation articulated that “the 4Ps program would have been an effective way to minimize such overlaps [of efforts of NGAs and LGUs] so greater attention can be made in making the intervention family-focused versus age-focused.”







**EDCOM II has proposed a comprehensive set of evidence-based nutrition interventions during the early years**, with DOH spearheading their implementation. The General Appropriations Bill of 2024 reflects an allocation of Php 300,000,000 specifically designated for nutritionally at-risk pregnant mothers and children below 5 years old in fifth- and sixth-class municipalities exhibiting  $\geq 15\%$  stunting rates in nonfood stamp sites. This allocation aims to complement the Philippine Multisectoral Nutrition Project, emphasizing a concerted effort to address nutrition challenges comprehensively.

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## Priority 2: Supply-Side Factors

Early childhood education entails implementing developmentally appropriate practices tailored to each age group. For infants aged 0 to 2 years, early stimulation is crucial, and families play a key role in this through interactive play, coupled with ensuring proper nutrition (see Table 6). Conversely, 3- to 4-year-olds benefit from early learning experiences, often facilitated through attendance at centers or through alternative modes (World Bank Advisory Services and Analytics [ASA], 2023, Jul 31).

**TABLE 6**  
**Changing Needs in Early Childhood Education**

Needs of Children in the Early Years	
<p>Ages 0-2</p> 	  <p>Health and nutrition, alongside early stimulation <b>for all children</b></p>
<p>Ages 3-4</p> 	  <p>Early childhood education in child development center / day cares <b>for all children</b></p> <p>Supplementary feeding <b>for malnourished children</b></p>

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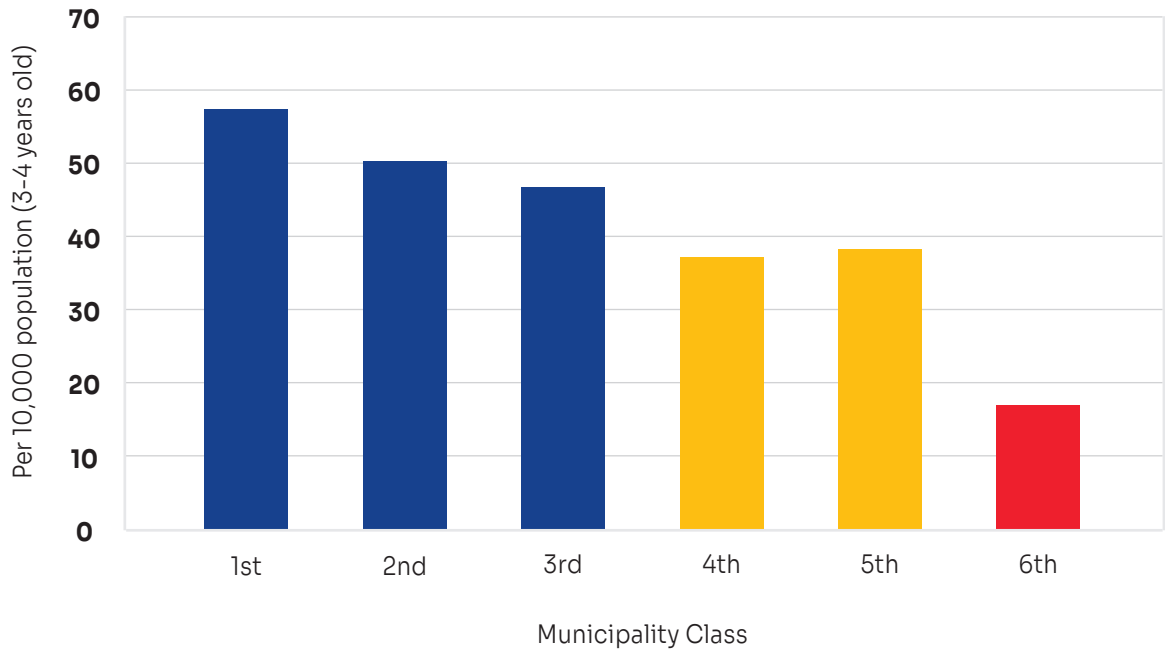
**Issue: The insufficiency of CDCs for universal ECCD coverage, particularly in economically disadvantaged municipalities, poses a significant challenge to equitable access.**

### **EDCOM II Findings**

As LGUs are responsible for providing ECCD services within their jurisdiction, the Commission notes that economically disadvantaged municipalities need more CDCs. The ECCD Council lists 946 NCDCs constructed as of September 2023. NCDCs are community- and center-based ECCD programs specifically constructed under the ECCD Council budget. LGUs provide the land and its development for the NCDCs in their communities. The ECCD Council's 2022 Annual Report also lists 1,990 converted public day care centers to CDCs (ECCD Council, 2023). CDCs, formerly known as day care centers under the regulation of the DSWD, are center-based ECE-ECCD programs "being managed by the national government agencies (NGAs), government-owned and -controlled corporations, local government units (LGUs), social welfare and development agencies, people's organizations, and other individuals" (Department of Social Welfare and Development [DSWD], 2011). Currently, the public CDCs are maintained and supported by LGUs, and the ECCD Council provides policies and guidelines to LGUs. However, lower-income LGUs struggle to put up centers and pay for the honoraria of CDWs (EDCOM II, 2023, Apr 20 & Sep 28). First-class municipalities pay CDWs approximately Php 9,000. This financial resource constraint may contribute to why 14% of LGUs recorded zero CDCs (Philippine Institute for Development Studies [PIDS], 2023).

As shown in Figure 6, there are only 1 to 2 CDCs for every 10,000 children aged 3 to 4 years in sixth-class municipalities. In comparison, first-class municipalities have as many as 6 CDCs for the same number of children (PIDS, 2023).

**FIGURE 6**  
**Day Care Centers per 10,000 Children Aged 3 to 4 Years**



Source: Administrative data from the DSWD and PSA

Although RA 6972 mandates that the province, city, or municipality concerned provide financial assistance for the establishment of every barangay day care center within their respective locality, this has not been fully implemented.

According to the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2024, Php 221,656,000 has been allocated for the establishment of NCDCs. This is a significant increase from the mere Php 12,562,000 that had been designated as a Special Provision for establishing NCDCs and converting existing day care centers into CDCs across various LGUs in 2022. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) reports in the NEP 2023 that, out of the targeted 12 NCDCs for 2021, 47 were successfully established (see Table 8). Nevertheless, none of the targeted 110 day care center conversions for 2020 materialized, as reported by the DBM (see Table 7). While this may be attributed to the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, this report still highlights a significant gap between intended outcomes and actual achievements in the allocation and utilization of funds for establishing CDCs in the country.

**TABLE 7**  
**ECCD Program Performance Information,**  
**National Expenditure Program (NEP) for FY 2022**

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES (OOs) / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (PIs)	2020 GAA Targets	Actual
READINESS OF FILIPINO CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN ACHIEVED		
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM		
<b>Outcome Indicators</b>		
1. Percentage of children from age zero (0) to four (4) years enrolled in child development centers (CDCs)	90%	73% (3,252/4,500)
2. Percentage of ECCD Centers accredited/recognized	85%	No Data Available
3. Percentage of LGUs that support the implementation of their ECCD Program	95%	100% (32/32)
<b>Output Indicators</b>		
1. ECCD centers established/expanded		
a. Number of National Child Development Centers (NCDCs) established	108	32
b. Number of day care centers converted into CDCs	110	0
2. Number of ECCD service providers trained for capacity building	1,800	1,813
3. ECCD centers provided with assistance for accreditation/recognition		
a. Percentage of targeted NCDC sites trained in the utilization of the accreditation/recognition tool	90%	83% (125/150)
b. Percentage of accreditation/recognitions conferred to CDCs and learning centers upon submission of complete documents from DSWD	90%	No Data Available

Source: DBM (2022)

**TABLE 8**  
**ECCD Program Performance Information,**  
**National Expenditure Program (NEP) for FY 2023**

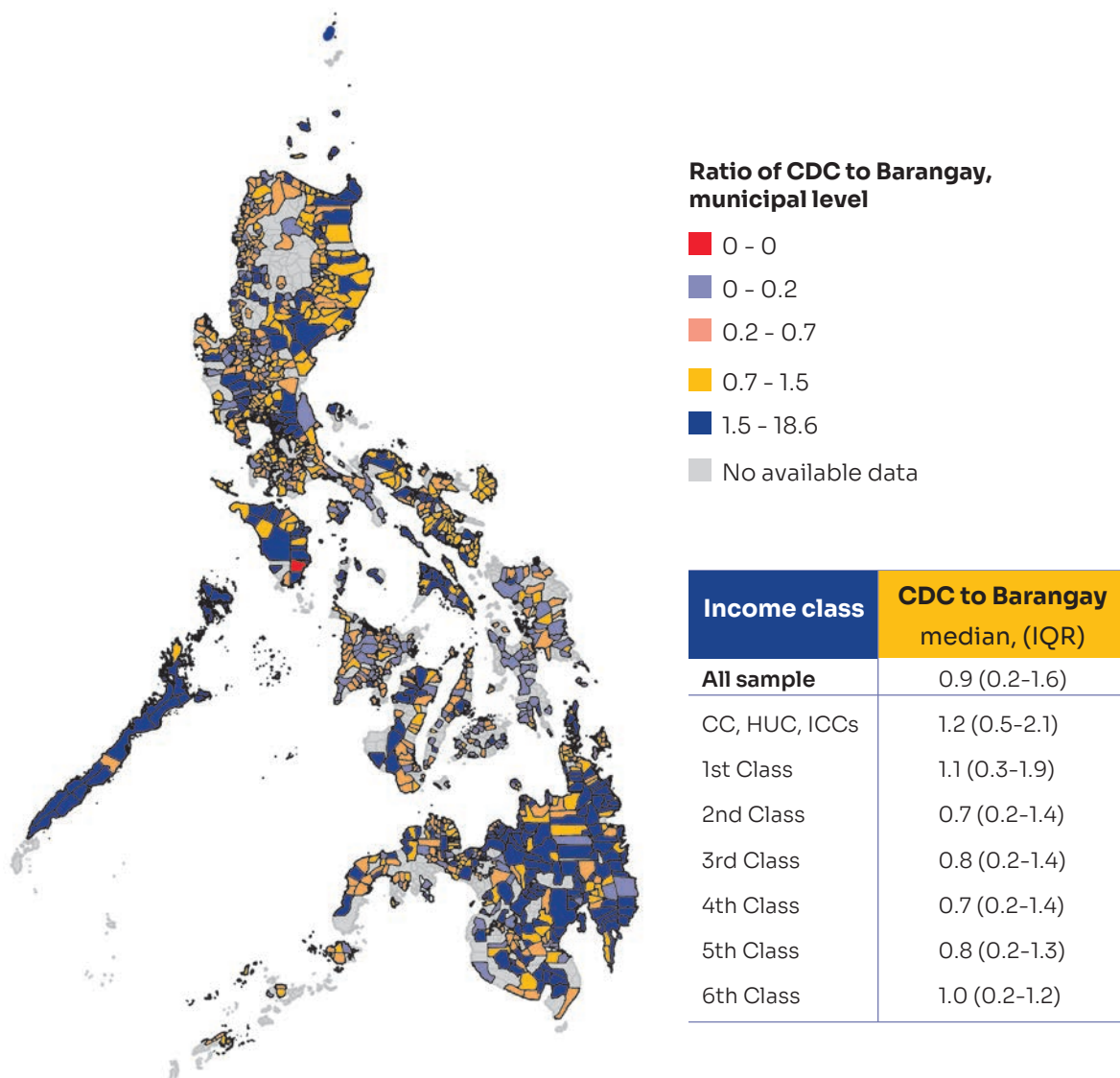
ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES (OOS)/ PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (PIs)	2021 GAA Targets	Actual
READINESS OF FILIPINO CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN ACHIEVED		Php 200,367,000
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM		Php 200,367,000
<b>Outcome Indicators</b>		
1. Percentage of children from age zero (0) to four (4) years enrolled in child development centers (CDCs)	75% (9,065)	60% (7,590/12,676)
2. Percentage of ECCD centers accredited/recognized	85%	0
3. Percentage of LGUs that support the implementation of their ECCD Program	92% (11/12)	100% (47/47)
<b>Output Indicators</b>		
1. ECCD centers established/expanded		
a. Number of National Child Development Centers (NCDCs) established	12	47
b. Number of day care centers converted into CDCs	0	0
2. Number of ECCD service providers trained for capacity building	1,800	3,346
3. ECCD centers provided with assistance for accreditation/recognition		
a. Percentage of targeted NCDC sites trained in the utilization of the accreditation/recognition tool	90% (72/80)	90 (136/150)
b. Percentage of accreditation/recognitions conferred to CDCs and learning centers upon submission of complete documents from DSWD	90%	100% (618/618)

Source: DBM, 2023

In spite of this progress, the disparity shown in Figure 7 still exhibits the inequitable distribution and density of CDCs in barangays across income classes with areas in the country with 0:0 to 0.2:0.7 ratios of CDC to barangay. Out of the current 42,027 barangays in the country, 26,820 barangays have no recorded CDC (Philippine Institute for Development Studies [PIDS], 2024). This means that only 15,207 barangays from all over the Philippines have at least one recorded CDC, or a mere 36% of the total number of barangays. Coverage ranges from 11% in Region VIII to 76% in Region II. The uneven distribution of CDCs prompts the need for a thorough investigation and intervention at the national level. As of 2021, the DSWD reports that there are 52,698 CDCs run by the LGUs in the Philippines (Tongson et al., 2023).

**FIGURE 7**

**Distribution and Density of CDCs per 1,000 Children Aged 3 to 4**



Note: Data adapted from the forthcoming manuscript by Ulep et al. (2023).

## ECCD Council's Commitment to Universal Access

**The ECCD Council continues to fulfill its target of providing universal access to CDCs nationwide.** The ECCD Council remains committed to expanding the coverage of ECCD programs and services across the country through the development of Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs), as well as teaching and learning resources for ECCD. The ECCD Council also continues to support the capacity building and institutional development of ECCD intermediaries and partners, as well as the accreditation of ECCD service providers as appropriated in the 2024 GAA.

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## Recommendations

**Development of a universal ECCD database.** Given ECCD's inherently multisectoral and interagency nature, the consolidation of data pertaining to early childhood education, nutrition, and welfare interventions is essential for the purpose of systematic monitoring, reporting, and targeted intervention. This initiative aims to generate, consolidate, and make accessible to key agencies responsible for ECCD—namely, the DOH, DSWD, ECCD Council, and DepEd—relevant and up-to-date information crucial for fostering interagency coordination.

This database will empower agencies to align their efforts, allocate resources efficiently, and implement interventions tailored to the specific needs of ECCD. This wealth of information will not only aid in pinpointing vulnerable areas but also in evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs. Moreover, it will serve as a catalyst for fostering collaboration among agencies, ensuring a holistic and well-coordinated approach to ECCD.



The dataset includes various crucial metrics, including each agency's expenditure on ECCD, the number of nutritionally at-risk pregnant women, and the count of children with special needs, among other pertinent indicators.

**Expansion of ECCD provision to encompass private, community-based, and home-based programs.** The Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 includes an increase in the participation rate of 0- to 4.11-year-old children in early learning programs, with a 2024 target of 28% (see Table 9). To achieve universal access to ECCD necessitates a multifaceted approach that goes beyond center-based programs. One strategy could be tapping the private sector to complement government provision in the form of vouchers. Another is leveraging LGUs to minimize the operational costs associated with establishing and maintaining CDCs by subsidizing the expenses incurred by private, community-based, and home-based ECCD programs. This approach draws inspiration from successful models implemented abroad; for instance, the government of Laos collaborated with civil society organizations to develop a village TV series and establish a community-based playgroup (World Bank ASA, 2023, Jul 31). Strengthening alternative delivery modes, such as home-based ECCD, allows for increased access to ECCD programs and services by parents and communities in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs). According to the ECCD Council, home-based ECCD programs “include homes as learning environments, where parent-child relationships are fostered and strengthened while ensuring that children receive a foundation for future learning and development” (ECCD Council Early Learning Programs, 2024).

**TABLE 9**  
**Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028: Indicator 3 Targets**

INDICATOR	BASELINE (2021)	ANNUAL PLAN TARGETS						MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY/ INTER- AGENCY BODY
		'23	'24	'25	'26	'27	'28		
<b>3. Participation Rate of 0-4.11 Years Old in Early Learning Programs (%)</b>	16.0 (2018)  <i>*2018 has the highest encoding rate by local government units [LGUs]; succeeding years have lower submission rates</i>	23	28	33	43	53	63	Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Information System, National Child Development Center Enrollment Tracking and Information System, National ECCD Monitoring Evaluation and Accountability System (will be fully utilized during the 2nd term of the Philippine Development Plan)	ECCD Council

Source: Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

An EDCOM II priority for the following year is to examine hindrances in demand for participation in early childhood education for 3- to 4-year-old children. Based on the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) in 2019, a considerable 97.8% of the respondents thought that children 3 to 4 years old were too young to go to school (see Figure 8).

**FIGURE 8****Reasons for Not Attending School for 3- to 4-Year-Old Children**

Reason for not attending school	Age group					
	3-30	3-4	5-11	12-15	16-17	18-30
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>24,807</b>	<b>3,885</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>19,359</b>
Schools are very far	0.4	0.5	3.4	1.0	1.0	0.3
No school within the barangay	0.1	0.1	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.1
No regular transportation	0.2	*	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.1
High cost of education	2.2	0.1	1.4	1.5	4.3	2.6
Illness	0.9	0.3	4.2	3.7	3.4	0.7
Disability	1.3	*	8.2	9.8	4.6	1.1
Housekeeping / Taking care of siblings	4.9	-	0.4	2.0	3.5	6.1
Marriage / Taking care of children	13.4	-	-	1.5	9.4	16.9
Employment / Looking for work	36.6	-	0.8	9.2	20.4	46.1
Lack of personal interest	6.3	0.4	13.0	41.9	28.3	6.0
Cannot cope with school work / Failing grades	0.4	*	0.7	4.0	2.0	0.3
Finished schooling	9.6	-	-	-	-	12.3
Problem with school record	0.2	-	1.2	1.6	1.3	0.1
Problem with birth certificate	0.2	0.3	2.0	0.2	0.2	0.1
Too young to go to school	16.6	97.8	52.3	-	-	-
Fairly income not sufficient to send child to school	5.8	0.2	8.1	14.4	15.4	6.4
Peer pressure	0.3	-	0.7	1.0	1.7	0.2
Bullying	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.4	0.9	0.2
Addiction to computer games	0.2	-	-	2.3	1.5	0.2
Expelled/Suspended	0.1	-	-	0.9	0.1	0.1
Other reasons	0.3	0.2	1.1	1.6	0.7	0.2

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a figure less than 0.1 percent; a dash (-) denotes data not available.

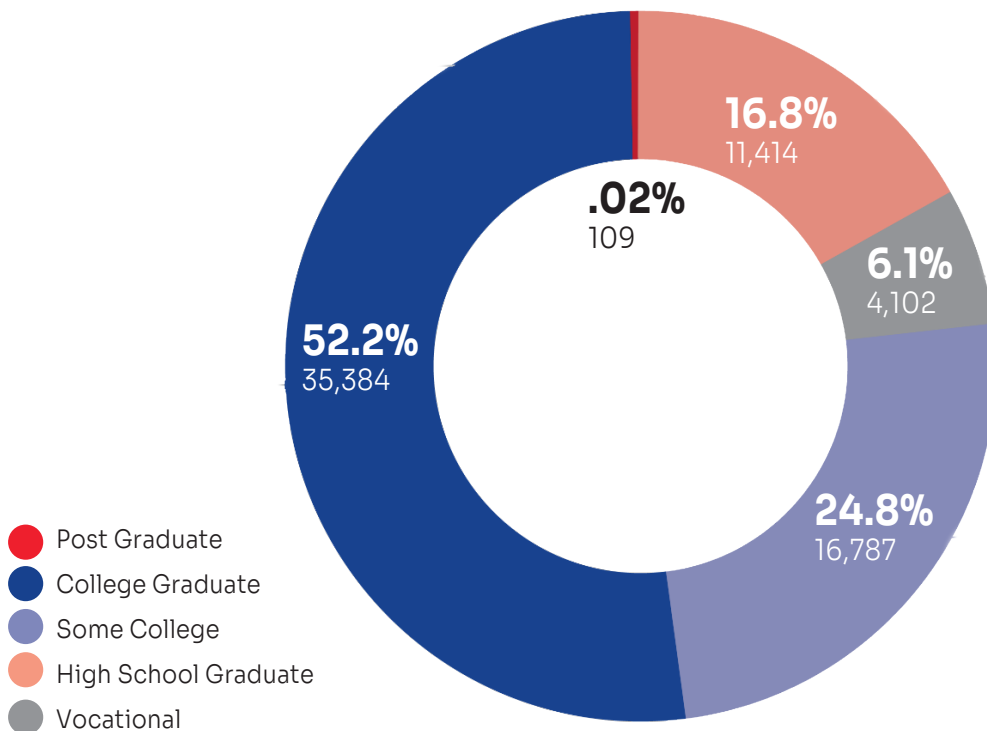
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority 2019 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey

**Production of high-quality child development workers/teachers (CDW/Ts).**

There are numerous gaps in the pipeline of CDW/Ts. Notably, there are significant disparities in the educational qualifications of CDW/Ts, with only 52% holding a college degree and 17% possessing high school diplomas (DSWD, 2023). It is crucial to highlight that not all CDW/Ts with college-level qualifications have a background in education, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Among those with college degrees, a noteworthy 53% fall within the age bracket of 46 years and older. These gaps in educational attainment and age distribution among CDW/Ts underscore the importance of targeted initiatives to ensure a well-qualified and age-diverse workforce in the field of child development.

**FIGURE 9**  
**Distribution of CDW/Ts by Highest Educational Attainment**



Source: *DSWD Magna Carta for CDWs Briefer (2023)*

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Issue: There is a lack of programs to support CDW/Ts in education and training.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

**The country's current Early Childhood Education curriculum faces challenges due to a misalignment with the competency standards of the ECCD Council.** This misalignment results in disparities in teaching content and limited career prospects for graduates. In a review of the current PSGs outlined in the 2017 Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 76, specifically addressing Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECED) commissioned by EDCOM, it was found that the existing curriculum encompasses a comprehensive array of competencies designed for teaching up to primary school levels (Grades 1 to 3) (Diaz, 2023). While this curriculum aligns substantially with the competency standards set forth by the ECCD Council (see Table 10), it is noteworthy that the latter's competencies are centered on teaching children aged 0 to 4 years rather than extending up to 8 years old.

This distinction results in a significant disparity in teaching content, particularly in areas such as social studies and science, which are not formally introduced to children in CDCs. Beyond educational considerations, this disparity has economic implications. Given that the program entails a 4-year bachelor's degree, the absence of secure positions and clear career pathways renders teaching in CDCs unattractive to graduates, thereby further limiting the available supply of qualified educators. This analysis underscores the need for a more nuanced curriculum alignment to bridge gaps in both educational content and career prospects for BECED graduates.

**TABLE 10****Staff Qualifications for ECCD-ECE Programs in the Philippines**

 <b>Center-Based Programs</b>			
<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>CDT</b>	<b>CDW</b>	<b>Teacher Aide</b>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree in Childhood Education or Elementary Education, preferably with specialization in Early Childhood or any degree related to Education, such as Psychology, Child Study, Family Life and Child Development	Bachelor's degree in any field	Secondary education certificate
<b>Training and seminars</b>	Must have attended basic training sessions or seminars related to ECCD or ECE		Must have attended orientation sessions related to health, nutrition, early education, social services, and other related topics
<b>Skills</b>	Must possess skills in community mobilization and effective oral communication		
	Preferably computer literate		
<b>Experience</b>	Must have experience in and demonstrate a love for working with children		
 <b>Home-Based Programs</b>			
<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Agency ECCD Service Provider</b>	<b>Other ECCD Service Provider</b>	
<b>Age</b>		18 years old and above	
<b>Education and training</b>	Bachelor's degree in any field	Must have basic literacy and completed training requirements	
<b>Professional eligibility</b>	Must have career professional eligibility (for public programs) or its equivalent (for private programs)		
 <b>Supervised Neighborhood Play (SNP) program</b>			
<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>SNP Worker</b>	<b>Parent Volunteer</b>	
<b>Age</b>	18 to 35 years old	18 years old and above	
<b>Education</b>	Must have at least completed secondary education		Must have basic literacy and completed training requirements
<b>Training</b>	Must have completed at least 2 hours of training in required ECCD topics, and two weeks of continuous on-the-job training		

Note: Center-based qualifications are based on the standards and guidelines for center-based early childhood programs for 0- to 4 year-old Filipino children (ECCD Council, 2015).

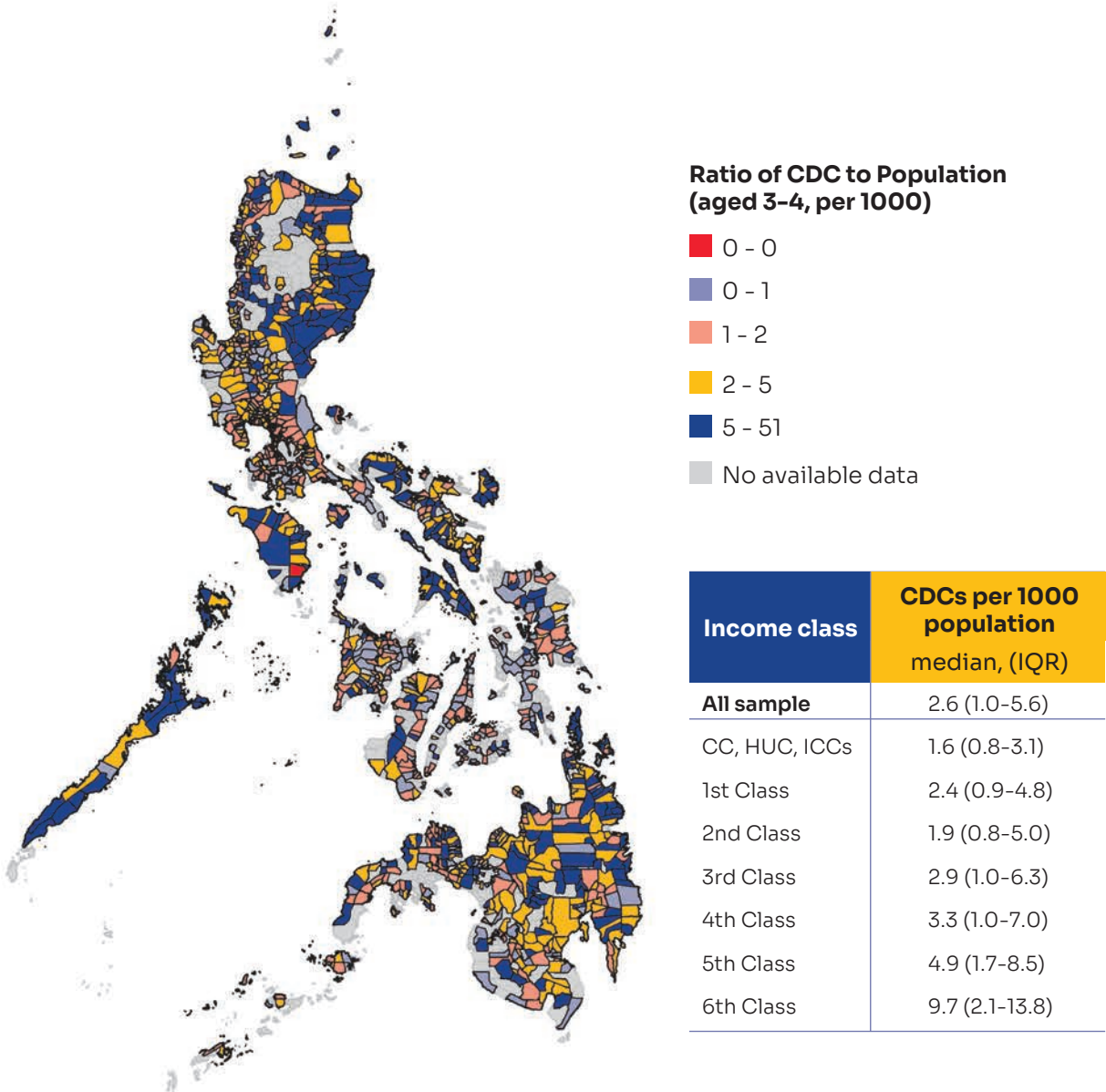


*Based on CHED data, available providers of BECEd are limited to a mere 224, and the total number of graduates specializing in this field since 2005 stands at only 3,993. This equates to an average of approximately 80 graduates annually. Such figures fall significantly short of the demand for primary school teachers alone.*

Based on CHED data, available providers of BECEd are limited to a mere 224, and the total number of graduates specializing in this field since 2005 stands at only 3,993. This equates to an average of approximately 80 graduates annually. Such figures fall significantly short of the demand for primary school teachers alone. The impact of this shortage is particularly pronounced in municipalities with lower income levels, as evidenced by the low ratio of CDW/T to the local population, as depicted in Figure 10.

**FIGURE 10**

**Distribution and Density of CDWs per 1,000 Children Aged 3 to 4**



Note: Data is adapted from the forthcoming manuscript by Ulep et al. (2023).

Consequently, as a result of the outdated Teacher Professionalization Act of 1994, ECE graduates specializing in teaching 0 to 4 year old children who want to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers need to register for the elementary level exam, even if it currently encompasses competencies and learning areas for children beyond the early years (0 to 4). These practices stand in contrast to practices observed in other Southeast Asian countries (see Table 11). For instance, in Vietnam, a mere 2 years of training in early childhood education suffices to qualify individuals to teach in educational centers (UNICEF Philippines, 2023).



**TABLE 11**  
**Minimum Standards/Requirements for ECCD Teachers in Southeast Asia**

Country	College Degree Holder	High School Diploma Holder	Training/ Certificate/ Credits	Registration/ Licensure/ Teaching Permit	Examination Passer	Character/ Attribute	Others (Specify)
Brunei Darussalam 			✓	✓		✓	Professional competence
Cambodia 		✓ (urban)	✓		✓	✓	
Indonesia 	✓					✓	Managerial, social, pedagogic, & professional competence
Lao PDR 	no answer						
Malaysia 		✓	✓	✓		✓	Professional competence
Myanmar 		✓	✓				
Philippines 	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Singapore 							
Thailand 	✓			✓		✓	
Timor-Leste 		✓	✓		✓		2 years ECE experience
Vietnam 			✓		✓	✓	2 years ECE experience

Source: Research Forum on Quality Assurance in ECCD in Southeast Asia (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2011)

**The prospect of becoming a CDW/T holds little appeal for BECEd graduates due to various factors, including a meager honorarium, an absence of job security, and a lack of career progression.** Data reveal that a substantial 19% of CDW/Ts, totaling 14,725 individuals, receive a monthly honorarium of less than Php 1,000 (DSWD, 2023). In contrast, the average salary for nonpermanent CDW/Ts is approximately Php 5,000 (UNICEF Philippines, 2023). In comparison to these figures, DepEd provides Kindergarten teachers with a significantly higher starting monthly salary of Php 27,000.

**Only 11% of CDW/Ts nationwide hold permanent positions.** The significant majority, constituting 89%, occupies nonpermanent and voluntary roles (see Figure 11). Since CDWs rely on LGUs for their monthly pay, their professional development is also subject to the support of their LGU's leadership.

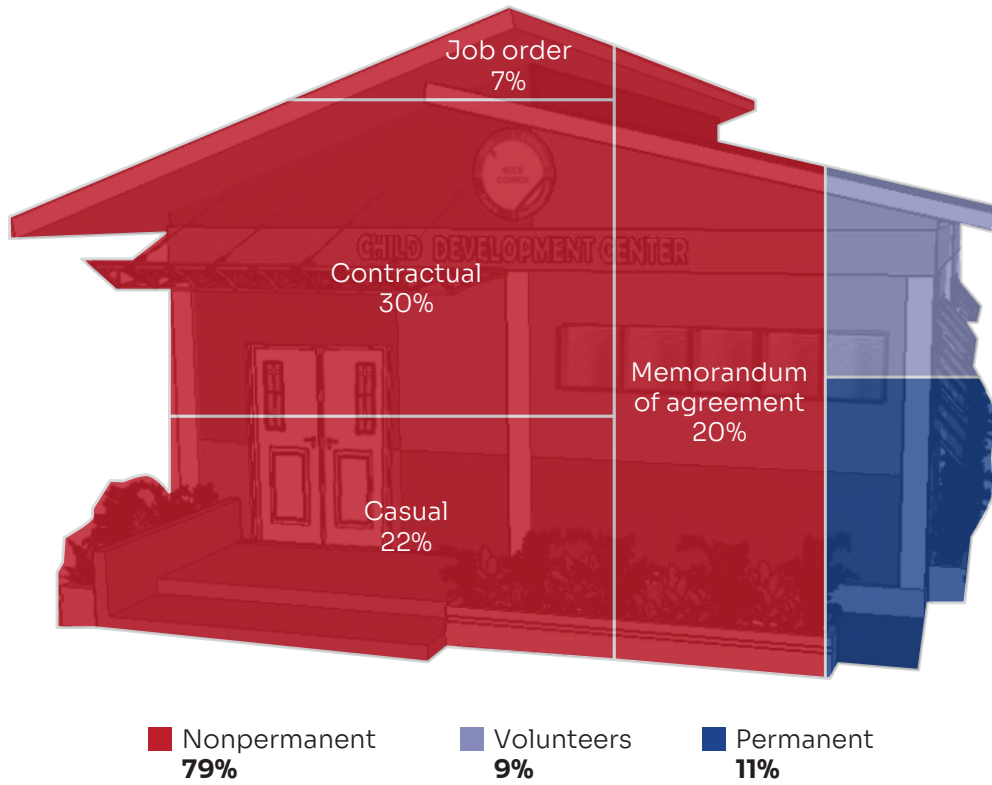
Survey findings among teachers indicate that slightly over 50% have undergone fewer than 2 training courses (UNICEF Philippines, 2019). This trend is unsurprising, given that the capacity-building programs for CDWs initiated by the ECCD Council amounted to an average of Php 32 million from 2018 to 2022, with an average utilization rate of 55%. According to the ECCD Council's 2022 Annual Report, a mere 1,292 CDW/Ts received training through their Early Childhood Education Program. This figure represents only a fraction of the more extensive universe of over 49,000 CDW/Ts in the country (ECCD Council, 2023).

*Data reveal that a substantial 19% of CDW/Ts, totaling 14,725 individuals, receive a monthly honorarium of less than Php 1,000 (DSWD, 2023). In contrast, the average salary for nonpermanent CDW/Ts is approximately Php 5,000 (UNICEF Philippines, 2023).*

Colors



**FIGURE 11**  
**Distribution of Employment Arrangements of CDW/Ts**



Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Source: DSWD (2023)

**Capacity-Building Efforts of the ECCD Council**

**The ECCD Council continues to professionalize CDW/Ts through various human resource development programs.**

There are 4 different training programs designed to equip CDW/Ts of varying capacities, provincial/city/municipal social welfare and development officers, and ECCD focal persons to become leaders. The ECCD Council strives to improve its utilization rate to be able to request a bigger budget share every year. Additionally, part of the scholarship contract of the trainees is to relay their learnings to the remaining CDW/Ts in their locality.

TESDA has also expressed its commitment to developing a training regulation for child development workers in 2024 in collaboration with the ECCD Council.

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## Recommendations

**Create pathways for CDW/Ts through certificate programs by the Technical Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and CHED.** EDCOM II has formally requested both agencies to undertake the development of certificate programs, and both have committed to initiating this process. Strengthening this initiative involves allocating a budget within TESDA specifically dedicated to upskilling CDW/Ts. In line with this commitment, a training regulation will be prioritized for development in 2024, focusing on enhancing the skills and capabilities of both existing and incoming CDW/Ts (refer to Annex).

**Create plantilla positions for child development workers and teachers.** The Basic Education and Early Childhood Alignment Act, or Senate Bill (SB) No. 2029 and HB 8393, has been authored by Senator Gatchalian, EDCOM II co-chair, and Representative Benitez, who serves as co-chair for the Standing Committee on ECCD. Both bills propose the creation of permanent positions for CDW/Ts in every city and municipality. Key provisions within the proposed legislation emphasize the prioritization of currently employed CDW/Ts in filling these plantilla positions, even if they do not initially meet the requirements. However, they will be afforded a grace period of 5 years to fulfill the specified requirements, particularly holding a bachelor's degree related to ECE.

Furthermore, the proposed bills advocate for the allocation of at least 1 CDT and 1 CDW for every NCDC, along with at least 1 CDW for every CDC. These legislative proposals aim to formalize and institutionalize the roles of CDW/Ts by creating stable and permanent positions, thereby enhancing job security and professional stability within the early childhood education sector.

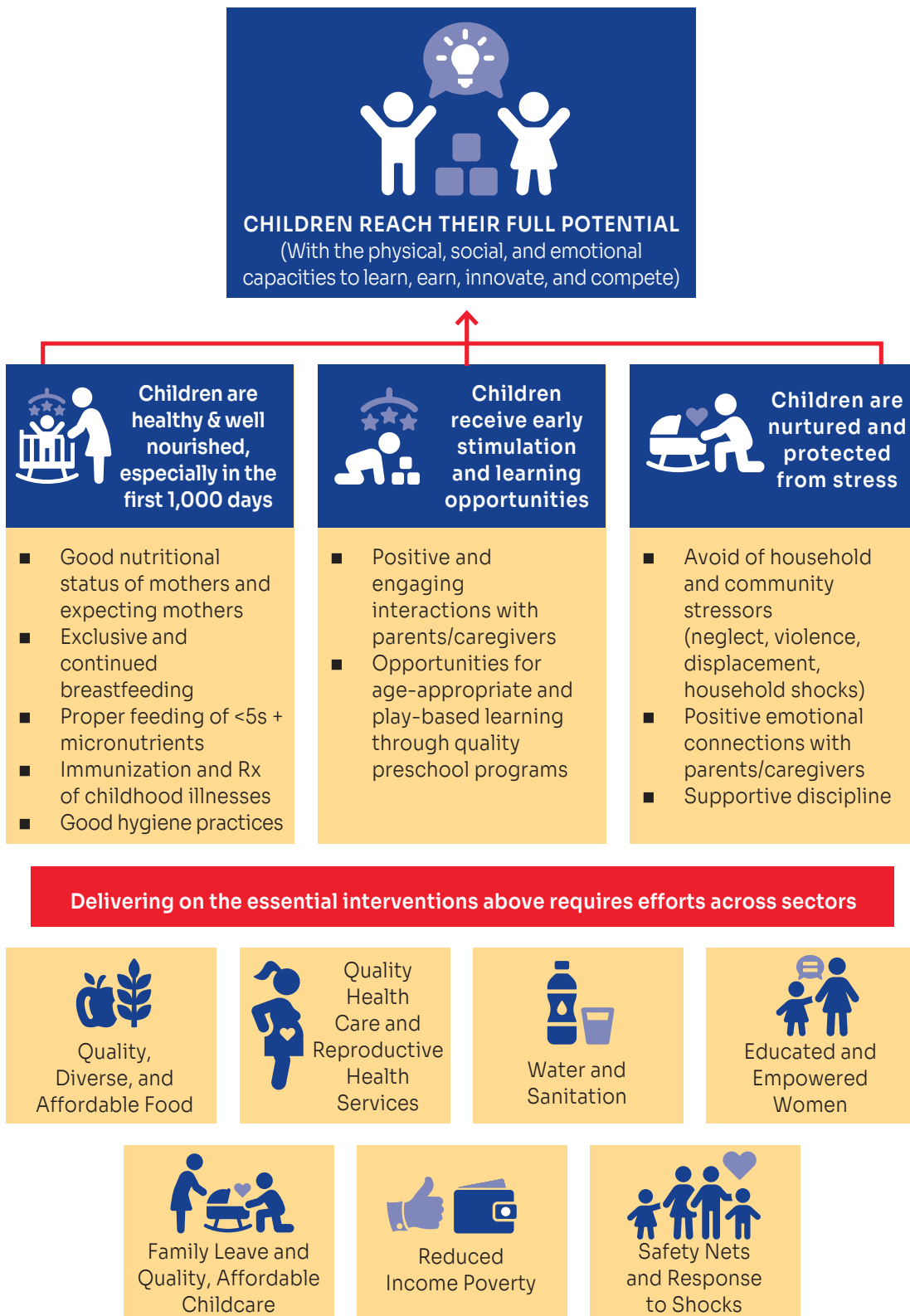


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## Priority 4: Governance and Financing of ECCD

The governance and finance of early childhood care and development are crucial in ensuring adequate services for young children. These encompass the intricate processes and mechanisms involved in decision-making, resource allocation, and policy implementation to support the diverse components of early childhood care and development programs. Such processes and mechanisms are indispensable for overseeing service quality, fostering equitable access, and guaranteeing the judicious utilization of financial resources. The adoption of a multisectoral approach is imperative in the implementation of ECCD programs and services (refer to Figure 12). This approach remains essential for addressing the diverse needs of young children on a global scale (Simasiku, 2022; Gonzalez-Fernandez et al., 2020).

**FIGURE 12**  
**Multisectoral Action for ECCD**



Source: *Early stimulation, nutrition and health: Why investments in early childhood matter? Providing Strategic Advice on Philippines Education System's Issues, Advisory Services and Analytics* (World Bank ASA, 2023, Jul 31)

## EDCOM II Findings

**Issue: The absence of quality assurance mechanisms and the inadequacy of resources for expansion hinder the effectiveness of ECCD programs.**

**ECCD governance in the country lacks quality assurance mechanisms, faces resource constraints for expansion, and grapples with coordination and accountability issues within a complex, decentralized system.**

In the Philippines, ECCD governance issues include the lack of mechanisms to ensure quality and insufficient resources to expand access (UNICEF Philippines, 2019; World Bank ASA, 2023). The system of governance and finance for ECCD in the country is characterized by complexity and a lack of clarity, as highlighted in the findings of the EDCOM II green paper (2023, Jun 2).

RA 10410 mandates the ECCD Council as the principal government agency responsible for supporting ECCD services nationwide. The Council operates with a governing board comprised of:



Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd)



Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH)



Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)



Executive Director of the ECCD Council



Executive Director of the National Nutrition Council (NNC)



President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)

and one private individual who is an ECCD practitioner expert

The adoption of a multisectoral approach in ECCD service delivery presents coordination challenges, as noted in the green paper on governance and financing of ECCD (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 2) and during the roundtable discussion on nutrition and feeding (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 27). These challenges arise from the division of roles among agencies based on the age of the children, with the ECCD Council, DOH, and DSWD collectively responsible for children aged 0 to 4, while DepEd assumes responsibility for those aged 5 to 8.



Additionally, interagency collaboration, while essential, introduces complexities in coordination and accountability. Further, the decentralized implementation of ECCD programs by LGUs contributes to implementation challenges (World Bank, 2023).

The ECCD Council assumes responsibility for key functions in the ECCD, which include the establishment of national standards, the formulation of policies and programs, the provision of technical assistance, the support of ECCD service providers, and the monitoring of ECCD service benefits and outcomes. It is crucial to note that the ECCD Council, by design, is not directly responsible for the actual implementation of programs.

The establishment of the national ECCD system, through RA 8980 (ECCD, 2023) marked a significant milestone. However, the roots of ECCD services in the Philippines trace back to the Barangay Day Care Center Law of 1978. Following this, RA 6972 further established ECCD services by requiring the establishment of CDCs for children ages 0 to 6 that were directly supervised by barangays (see Table 12).

The decentralization of ECCD services to local government units was a pivotal move, initially introduced in 1978 and reiterated in 1990 (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2010, as cited in Bustos–Orosa, 2022). This decentralization played a crucial role in bringing ECCD services closer to communities, with a focus on local governance and supervision by barangays.

Additionally, LGUs customarily adhere to the guidelines of the DSWD, especially considering that barangay day care centers were originally established under the supervision of the DSWD.

At present, with the devolution of health and social welfare services, ECCD programs and services remain predominantly decentralized, as highlighted in discussions during the ECCD meetings in the Senate (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 22, Jul 27; UNICEF Philippines, 2023, Aug 31).



The decentralization of ECCD services to local government units was a pivotal move, initially introduced in 1978 and reiterated in 1990 (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2010, as cited in Bustos-Orosa, 2022).

This decentralization played a crucial role in bringing ECCD services closer to communities, with a focus on local governance and supervision by barangays.

**TABLE 12**  
**Coordination Across Levels of Governance**

<b>NATIONAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>ECCD Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is mandated to oversee and coordinate ECCD programs, with its member agencies tasked to oversee and coordinate the implementation of ECCD programs in their sector.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only DepEd remains as a centralized entity wherein regional offices have direct supervision over their provincial counterparts. The ECCD Council does not have such offices.</li> </ul>
<b>SUBNATIONAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>Provincial Offices (PSWDO, PNAO, PHO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Their main responsibility is to provide technical assistance to their local counterparts.</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It formulates and harmonizes provincial-level plans, programs, and policies for children.</li> </ul>
<b>LOCAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>City/Municipal Level</b>	
<b>Local School Board (LSB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They primarily coordinate the implementation of ECCD programs.</li> </ul>
<b>City/Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (C/MCPC)</b>	
<b>Barangay Level</b>	
<b>Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It coordinates the implementation of ECCD programs in the locality.</li> </ul>

Source: World Bank ASA (2023, Jul 31)

**The decentralized approach to ECCD leads to varying access levels and service quality, posing challenges in data collection, monitoring, and financial resource allocation.** This decentralization results in differing levels of access and service quality across cities and municipalities (World Bank ASA, 2023, Jul 31), leading to difficulties in comprehensive data collection on enrollment and spending in ECCD programs.

**Efforts to enhance the quality and accessibility of ECCD services in the field involve the appointment of ECCD focal persons in all provinces and municipalities by the ECCD Council.** These individuals are tasked with coordinating with local government leaders, advocating for children's rights and nutrition programs, and collaborating with, training, and monitoring CDW/Ts, as noted by Bustos-Orosa in 2022. However, the role of the local ECCD focal person is typically ad hoc and often filled by the municipal/city social welfare and development officer (M/CSWDO), as indicated in discussions during the ECCD meeting held in the city of Taguig (EDCOM II, 2023, Apr 20).

Moreover, LGUs express the need for technical assistance, resource augmentation, and prompt responses to local concerns—constraints attributed to the limited capacity of the ECCD Council Secretariat. Calls for additional human resources have been echoed by both LGUs and the ECCD Council, emphasizing the challenges faced in effectively managing and supporting decentralized ECCD initiatives, according to the response to the green paper on governance and financing of ECCD (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 2).

Apart from being unable to get complete data on ECCD expenditures, financial issues extend to inadequate financial and human resources to expand ECCD programs (World Bank ASA, 2023, Jul 31). Despite government allocations for ECCD programs, the current funding must be augmented to encompass the needs of all children, as the existing resources fall short. The insufficiency of resources has repercussions on the ability to provide equitable compensation for CDW/Ts, thereby impacting the overall quality of ECCD programs.

In an analysis conducted by the World Bank in 2023, data from 28 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) between 2020 and 2022 revealed that merely 0.26% of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) was spent on preprimary education. The Philippines, for instance, allocated 0.22% of its GDP to ECCD (World Bank ASA, 2023). This comparative analysis emphasized the significant challenge faced by countries, including the Philippines, in mobilizing sufficient financial resources to support ECCD initiatives effectively.

The lack of financial support for ECCD, as highlighted by the World Bank's 2023 report, stems from 2 primary factors. Firstly, competing public priorities that overshadow ECCD, particularly in LMICs already constrained by resources, pose a significant challenge. Secondly, the absence of adequate costing for ECCD, coupled with uncertainty regarding the precise financial requirements and the most cost-effective approaches to achieve ECCD goals, further hinders equitable access and compromises the quality of ECCD services.

Given these findings, the EDCOM II's sub-committee on ECCD raised governance challenges and explored mechanisms for additional financing in ECCD. This involved extensive discussions with stakeholders in the city of Taguig (EDCOM II, 2023, Apr 20), ECCD meetings in the Senate (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 22, Jul 27, 2023a, Aug 31), dialogues with UNICEF Philippines (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 13, 2023b, Aug 31), and expert consultation with the World Bank Group (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 23).

*In an analysis conducted by the World Bank in 2023, data from 28 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) between 2020 and 2022 revealed that merely 0.26% of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) was spent on preprimary education. The Philippines, for instance, allocated 0.22% of its GDP to ECCD (World Bank ASA, 2023).*

## Strengthening Multiagency Coordination Through ECCD Council Leadership

**The DepEd secretary's role as the ex-officio chairperson of the ECCD Council is crucial for addressing governance issues and ensuring coordination among various NGAs.** During the DepEd's Senate budget hearing on September 4, 2023, it was suggested that the DepEd secretary designate a DepEd undersecretary or assistant secretary to serve as permanent representative in order to ensure consistent focus on ECCD and the regular convening of the Council.

**Appointing the DILG secretary as the ex-officio vice chairperson to represent LGUs in the ECCD Council can help in enhancing the implementation of ECCD services at the LGU level.** The absence of a member from a coordinating body representing LGUs in the ECCD Council leads to the deprioritization of ECCD service delivery. While ULAP holds membership in the ECCD Council (Presidential Communications Office [PCO], 2013), the inclusion of the DILG secretary as the ex-officio vice chairperson in the proposed SB 2029 and HB 8393 will fortify the delivery of ECCD services, given that implementation occurs at the LGU level.

**In the context of mechanisms of finance, several laws have been enacted to enable local governments to provide financial support for ECCD programs** (see Table 13). These legislative measures aim to ensure that local governments actively contribute to the funding and implementation of ECCD initiatives, emphasizing the importance of early childhood education and development.

**TABLE 13**  
**ECCD Sources of Funding: From LGU Budgets**

Year	National Policy	Coverage
1968	<b>Special Education Fund (RA 5447)</b>	<p>This act established the Special Education Fund (SEF) from a portion of the taxes on Virginia-type cigarettes and duties on imported leaf tobacco, and an additional tax on real property.</p> <p>Local school boards (LSBs) may use the funds to support education programs and services.</p>
1991	<b>Local Government Code (RA 7160)</b>	<p>LGUs should prioritize basic services and facilities, which include the maintenance of day care centers (with primary responsibility given to barangays).</p> <p>Provinces are allocated 23% of the total national tax allocation (NTA), while cities and municipalities each receive 23% and 34%, respectively. Barangays, on the other hand, are allocated 20%.</p> <p>Distribution based on population results in 50%—land area receives 25% and the remaining 25% is shared equally. Meanwhile, barangays receive 60% based on their population and share the remaining 40% equally.</p>
2006	<b>Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act (RA 9344)</b>	<p>One percent of the NTA of cities, municipalities, and barangays, shall be allocated to the strengthening and implementation of programs of local councils for the protection of children (LCPCs), including ECCD programs.</p>
2013	<b>Early Years Act (RA 10410)</b>	<p>This act mandates LGUs to allocate a portion of their SEF and Gender and Development (GAD) fund in addition to other local funds, to support the implementation of their ECCD Programs.</p>

*Note: The national tax allocation was previously called the internal revenue allotment (IRA). See [https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/publications/SEPO/AAG%20IRA%20in%202022\\_\\_21March2022.pdf](https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/publications/SEPO/AAG%20IRA%20in%202022__21March2022.pdf).*

**Limited funding is a common challenge for all LGUs aiming to provide accessible ECCD services, with the SEF designated as a financing mechanism at the local level.** Generated from an additional 1% tax on real property, SEF stands as a prescribed source of financing for ECCD programs at the local level, as outlined by the PCO in 2013. However, the utilization of SEF for ECCD programs varies among LGUs, as indicated by computations made by EDCOM II staff. This diversity in application poses challenges in ensuring the effective allocation of funds to support ECCD initiatives.

Moreover, despite the enactment of RA 10410 and RA 11037, or the Masustansiyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act, which have extended additional responsibilities to LGUs in the realm of education and have explicitly granted LSBs the authority to allocate portions of their SEF for the implementation of the ECCD Program and the National Feeding Program, these laws introduce functions and associated expenditures distinct from those outlined in the Local Government Code. Examples include the expenses related to organizing parent cooperatives that oversee community-based ECCD programs and the costs associated with health examinations, vaccinations, and deworming.






**Further, the predominant use of the SEF is directed toward basic education priorities, decisions for which are made by the LSB.** Despite the ECCD Council now being an attached agency of DepEd (RA 10410), there continues to be limited attention given to ECCD at the local level. One plausible explanation is that the local social welfare and development office oversees ECCD services in the LGU. The absence of a robust advocate for ECCD within the LSB results in minimal utilization of the SEF for ECCD purposes.

**The absence of a clearly defined budget allocation from local funds earmarked for ECCD purposes often leads to ECCD being sidelined.** While available sources of funding from NGA budgets are available for ECCD programs and services (see Table 14), the absence of a clear local budget for ECCD poses implementation challenges for LGUs. LGUs have the option to access other local funds in addition to the SEF, such as the GAD fund, to support ECCD initiatives.

While policies with budget allocations for ECCD have been institutionalized (see Table 15), a comparative review of ECCD policies on funding in the Asia-Pacific region reveals that there are more opportunities to explore to ensure equity and access to young Filipino children, such as needs-based grants, national government subsidies, and multisectoral financial assistance (Navarro, 2022; World Bank, 2023a) (see Table 14).



**TABLE 14**  
**ECCD Sources of Funding: From NGA Budgets**

Agency	Purpose
 <p><b>Department of Education (DepEd)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic education system (K to 12)</li> <li>ECCD Council</li> </ul>
 <p><b>ECCD Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECCD Program support</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP)</li> <li>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Department of Health (DOH)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oral Health Program</li> <li>Mandatory Immunization of Infants and Children</li> <li>Family Health, Nutrition, and Responsible Parenting Program</li> <li>NNC</li> </ul>
 <p><b>National Nutrition Council (NNC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition Management Program, including support for the First 1,000 Days.</li> <li>Selection, training, and deployment of Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS)</li> </ul>

Note: Data are based on the national budget approved for each year (DBM, 2023), General Appropriations Act (<https://www.dbm.gov.ph/index.php/dbm-publications/general-appropriations-act-gaa>). Information on Oral Health Program taken from DOH Center for Health Development SOCCSKARGEN Region, 2015. Dental Health Program (<https://ro12.doh.gov.ph/index.php/programs-projects/family-health/dental-health-program>); see links for references for legislation or programs.





**TABLE 15**  
**Summary of ECCD Source of Funds in the Philippines**

Policy	Source of Funds	Description
<b>Allocation from National Government Agencies</b>		
<b>Early Years Act (RA 10410)</b>	Budgets of member agencies of the ECCD Council for programs, ECCD-related initiatives	This is approved annually through the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for sector-specific initiatives for children covered by the ECCD system (for example, immunization, school feeding, and 4Ps).
	ECCD Council	This is approved annually through the GAA for (a) development of Policies, Standards, and Guidelines; (b) capacity building and institutional development of intermediaries and other partners; (c) accreditation of ECCD service providers; and (d) establishment of NCDCs.
	PAGCOR (2013–2018 only)	RA 10410 allots Php 500 million every year for 5 years from PAGCOR revenue for the establishment of NCDCs and the conversion of day care centers to CDCs. PAGCOR has allocated a total of Php 2.3 billion for this purpose between 2016 to 2023.
<b>Allocation from LGUs</b>		
<b>Local Government Code (RA 7160)</b>	National tax allocation and other local revenues	RA 7160 states that a budget for basic service and facilities should be prioritized by the LGU before allocating to other purposes; otherwise, no percentage or amount is specific.
<b>Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act (RA 9344)</b>	National tax allocation	One percent should be allocated to support programs of the LCPC (which cover ECCD programs).
<b>Early Years Act (RA 10410)</b>	Special Education Fund	No percentage or amount is specified.
	Gender and Development fund	No percentage or amount is specified.
<b>Others</b>		
<b>Early Years Act (RA 10410)</b>	Intergovernmental donors and government financial institutions	No percentage or amount is specified; LGUs are encouraged to generate additional funds to support public programs, including for the urban poor.
	Fees and contributions from private individuals	No percentage or amount is specified; fees may be collected to support both public and private ECCD programs monitored by the ECCD Council to ensure that they are affordable and within limits.

Note: PAGCOR refers to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation.

Source: Early Childhood Education Advisory Services (ECE ASA) Report (World Bank ASA, 2023, Jul 31), RA 10410 (<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2013/03/26/republic-act-no-10410/>; retrieved on Dec 28, 2023), RA 7160 (<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1991/10/10/republic-act-no-7160/>; retrieved on Dec 28, 2023), and RA 9344 (<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2006/04/28/republic-act-no-9344-s-2006/>; retrieved on Dec 28, 2023)




**FIGURE 13****Expanding ECED Services Through Different Financing Mechanisms**

	<b>Direct</b>	<b>Indirect</b>
<b>Public Funds</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget line allocations</li> <li>▪ Block grants</li> <li>▪ Subsidies</li> <li>▪ Matching/ Partial matching funds</li> <li>▪ Vouchers</li> <li>▪ CCTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need-based sliding scale subsidies</li> <li>▪ Parental and maternity leave policies</li> <li>▪ Tax credit and refunds</li> </ul>
<b>Private Funds</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workplace-based care</li> <li>▪ Payments to providers</li> <li>▪ Matching funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vouchers</li> <li>▪ Donations in cash or in kind</li> </ul>
<b>Public-Private Partnerships</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Matching funds for capital investment initiatives to expand ECD services</li> </ul>	
<b>International Agencies</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding of government-approved programs (recipients can be public or private providers, or program participants)</li> </ul>	

Source: *Early childhood education and development: Effective systems, governance, financing and quality assurance, providing strategic advice on Philippines education system's issues, Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA)*, adapted from Belfield (2006)

An examination of the funding mechanisms of other LMICs, such as Peru, Indonesia, and Malaysia, provide useful insights (see Table 16).

**TABLE 16****ECCD Governance and Finance in Peru, Indonesia, and Malaysia**

<b>Peru</b> 	Multisectoral results-based budgeting
<b>Indonesia</b> 	Decentralization
<b>Malaysia</b> 	Incentives for professional development through scholarship grants Incentives for the private sector through Private Preschool Launching Grants Subsidies for low-income families to access private preschools

Source: ECE ASA (World Bank ASA, 2023, Jul 31)



**ECED**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION DIVISION



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## Recommendations

### **Strengthening the ECCD Council Governing Board to include the DILG.**

This provision is already embodied in the proposed Basic Education and Early Childhood Education Alignment Act through SB 2029 by Senator Gatchalian and HB 8393 by Representative Benitez, both of whom are EDCOM II Commissioners.

### **Considering complementarities in service delivery on the ground: local councils for the protection of children (LCPCs), barangay nutrition scholars (BNSs), and barangay health workers (BHWs).**

The Commission intends to study the composition and capability of LCPCs for coordinating ECCD services. LCPCs are the equivalent of the ECCD Council in local governments, and BNSs and BHWs are their frontline workers. These barangay workers complement the work of CDW/Ts in educating parents and families on early childhood care and development.

**Including a representative of ECCD on the local school board.** The ECCD representative can be in the person of the local ECCD focal person, Municipal/ City Social Welfare and Development Officer (M/CSWDO), or local Education Division chief. The Commission is studying this provision to be inserted in SB 155, or the 21st Century School Boards Bill.

**Creating intensive funding and policy interventions.** In accordance with the goals of the first EDCOM and the Early Years Act of 2013, the national government will undertake this initiative for CDCs and nutrition programs in fifth- and sixth-class municipalities and GIDAs.

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## Next Steps for Year 2

**The Commission is dedicated to prioritizing early childhood nutrition by developing maternal health and nutrition models, examining resource provision issues through LGU surveys, and exploring demand-side factors influencing ECCD, including consultations with private sector experts.**

Given the enduring impact of nutrition interventions during early childhood and their significance in human development, the Commission will continue to prioritize nutrition and feeding within its scope of work. This entails the development of models for maternal health and early childhood nutrition, focusing specifically on ages 0 to 59 months. These models aim to guide LGUs in their implementation efforts and provide a foundation for policies at the national level, facilitating the scaling up of impactful and effective nutrition interventions by NGAs.

**In a concerted effort to enhance ECE throughout the country, EDCOM II will undertake an examination of issues pertaining to the provision of materials and resources for ECE.**

The preliminary phase of this initiative involves conducting a survey of LGUs to assess the availability of ECE resources. Additionally, consultations with experts from the private sector will be conducted to contribute insights into the development of materials for ECE.

**Exploring new dimensions in the landscape, EDCOM II will delve into demand-side factors affecting ECCD.**

A key focus will be on understanding barriers related to parental perceptions and engagement in ECCD. Another critical aspect involves the examination of best practices employed by provinces, cities, and municipalities across the nation in advocating for ECCD programs. The objective is to facilitate the delivery of these essential services to all young Filipino children.



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## BASIC EDUCATION

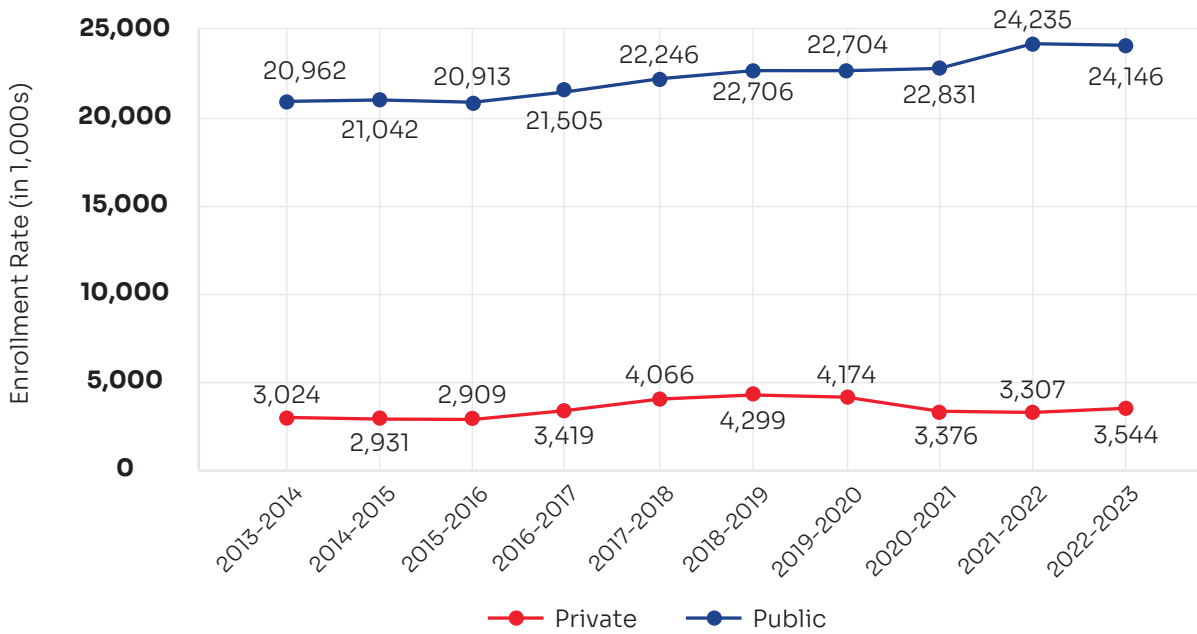
# Striving for Excellence: Addressing Lingering Dilemmas in Basic Education

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**Despite consistent improvements in participation and enrollment rates in basic education over the past decade, the quality of the education system in the Philippines remains a significant concern.** Data from the Learning Information System of DepEd show a constant increase in the number of enrollees as well as a decrease in dropout rates from SY 2013–2014 to SY 2022–2023 (see Figure 1). Despite the slight dip in SY 2020–2021 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment rates have returned to previous levels, with 27,794,282 enrolled in the current school year. Even enrollment in private schools, which declined by almost 800,000 during the same period, has steadily increased.

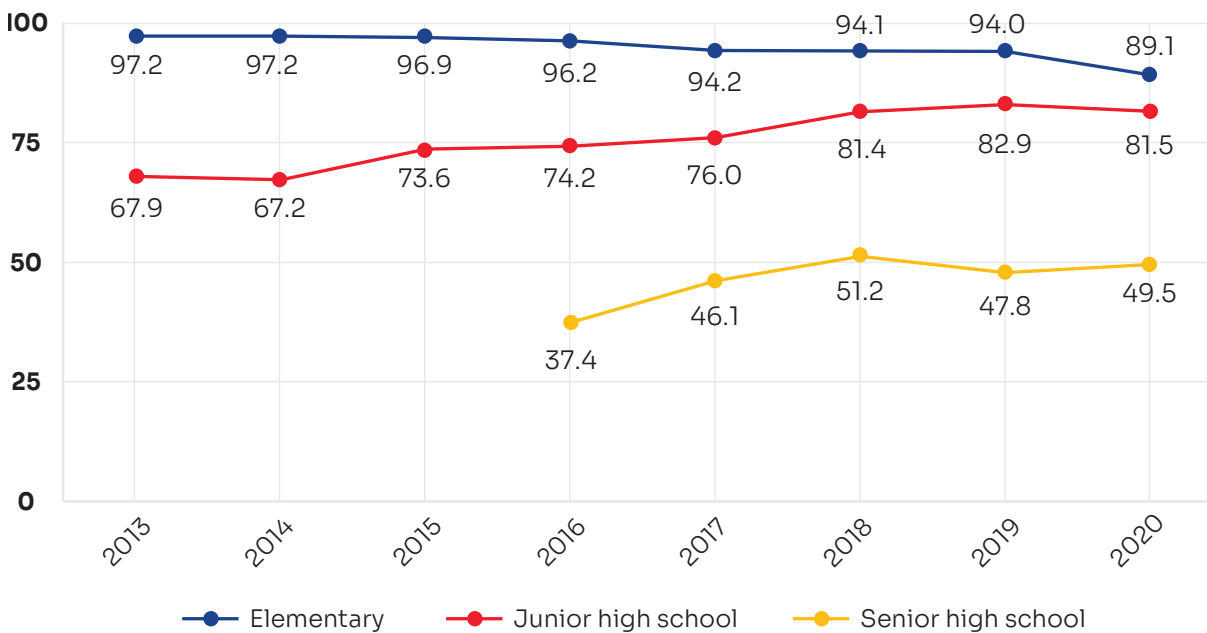


**FIGURE 1**  
**Enrollment Rates, 2013–2023**



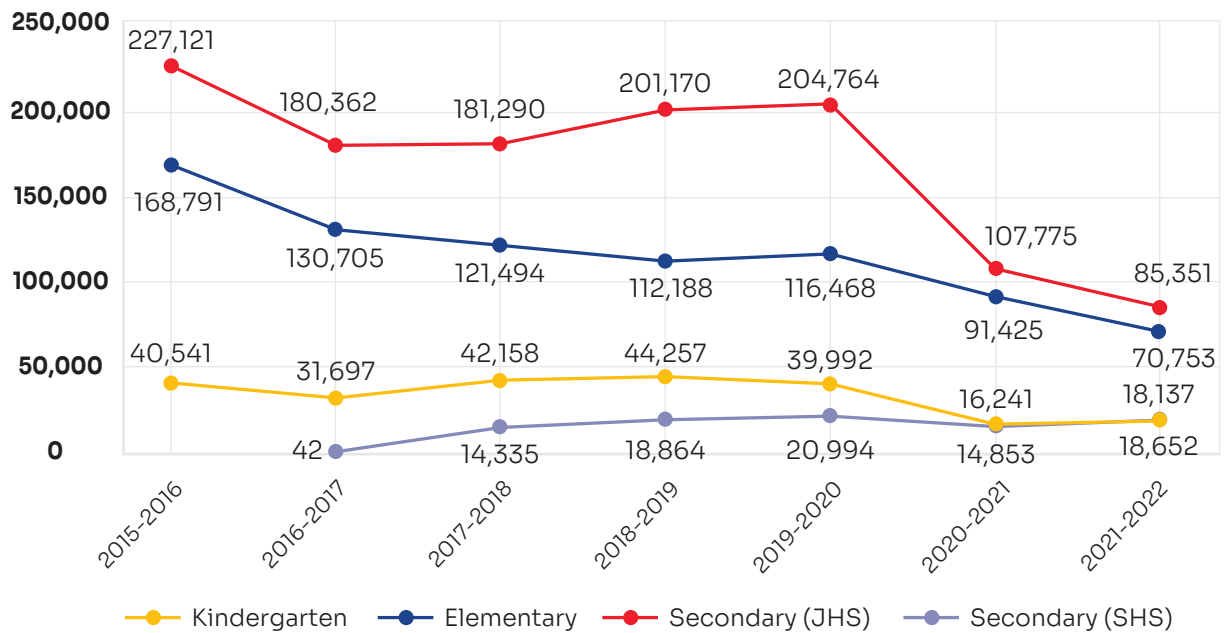
Note: Data adapted from the Department of Education Planning Service–Education Management Information System Division (PS-EMISD) received on May 2023.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Net Enrollment Rates, 2013–2023**



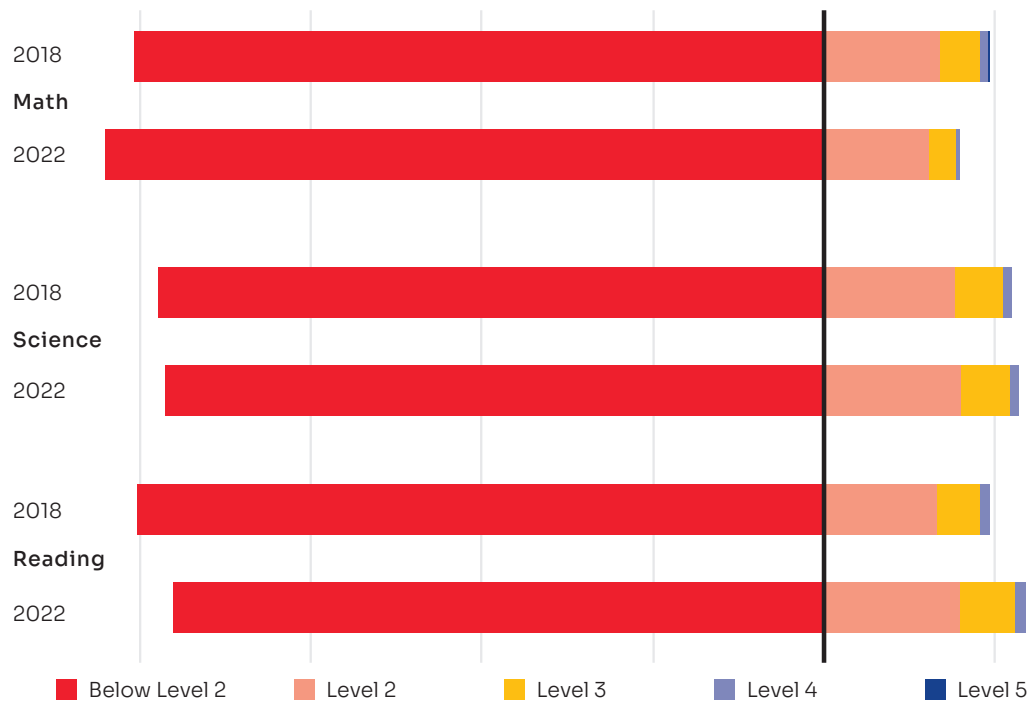
Note: Data adapted from the Philippine Statistics Authority (<https://psa.gov.ph/sdg/Philippines/metadata>).

**FIGURE 3**  
**Dropout Rates, 2015–2022**



Note: Data adapted from the Department of Education Planning Service Education Management Information System Division (PS-EMISD) received on May 2023.

While significant improvements have been made in access to basic education, issues regarding the quality of the education system persist. According to the Human Capital Index, it is estimated that a Filipino learner who starts school at 4 years old would have received 12.9 years of schooling by age 18; however, factoring in what children learn, this could be equivalent to only 7.5 years (World Bank, 2022). This estimate is based on the performance of the Philippines in various international large-scale assessments in 2018 and 2019. Additionally, the recently released Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 results show that, similar to 2018, more than 75% of the 15-year-old Filipino learners who took the test scored below the minimum level of proficiency in Math, Reading, and Science literacy (see Figure 4). National assessments also confirm these findings. According to a report from DepEd (2023), the National Achievement Test (NAT) for Grade 6 (SY 2020–2021) shows that students are nearly proficient in Filipino, with a mean percentage score of 54%, but achieved only a low proficiency in Math (41%), English (44%), Araling Panlipunan (44%), and Science (44%).

**FIGURE 4****Comparison of Proficiency Levels of Filipino Learners in PISA 2018 and PISA 2022**

Note: Data adapted from PISA 2018 (OECD, 2019) and PISA 2022 international report (OECD, 2023).

To contribute to improving the country's basic education system, the EDCOM II Basic Education sub-committee is working on 6 priority areas, 3 of which were prioritized in year 1: learning resources, measurement of learning outcomes, and curriculum and instruction.

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## Priority 5: Learning Resources

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Issue: Delays in textbook procurement, despite budget allocations, impact the availability of essential educational materials and hinder effective teaching and learning.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

While there are a variety of teaching and learning resources, for year 1, EDCOM II opted to focus primarily on the availability of textbooks in public schools. Textbooks are critical inputs to education; when packaged and aligned with lesson plans, learning materials, skills-based ongoing teacher training, and continuous mentoring, these can enable teachers to provide structured pedagogy, which the 2023 Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP) report cites as one of the most cost-effective educational interventions. Smart and Jagannathan (2018) also argue that textbooks help teachers save time and effort for preparations, provide learners with material for self-directed learning, and make it easier for teachers to track progress and support individual learners.

**One of the key findings in this priority area is that for the past decade, even if the budget is available, textbooks are not procured on time.** EDCOM's analysis of the data submitted by the Bureau of Learning Resources (BLR) shows that for Grade 1 to Grade 10, only 27 textbooks have been procured since 2012 (see Figure 5). Specifically, since the introduction of the K to 12 curriculum, only Grades 5 and 6 textbooks have been successfully procured. Meanwhile, the data cited in the Agency Budget Notes of the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department from FY 2020 to FY 2024 show that from 2018 to 2022 alone, a total of Php 12,648,000,000.00 has been allocated to textbooks and other instructional materials, but only Php 4,470,900,000.00 (35.3%) has been obligated, and Php 951,900,000.00 (7.5%) has been disbursed (see Figure 6). Notably, during the pandemic, DepEd explains that they have deprioritized the printing of textbooks from FY 2020–2023 and instead focused on the provision of self-learning modules.

**FIGURE 5****Summary of Successful Procurement of Textbooks (2012–2023)  
for Grade 1 to Grade 10**

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Araling Panlipunan										
English										
EPP/TLE										
EsP										
Filipino										
Math										
Music & Arts										
PE & Health										
Science										



No textbooks

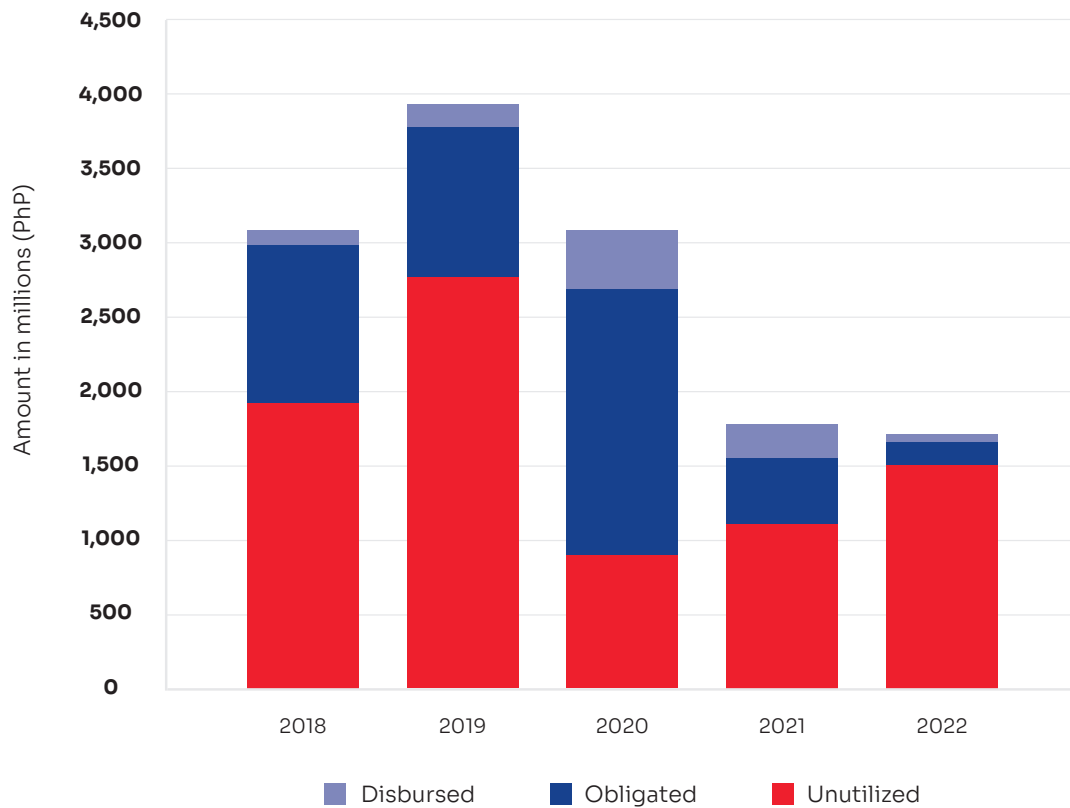


With textbooks

Note: Data adapted from a communication from the Department of Education submitted last August 2023.

These findings align with the results of international large-scale assessments. In the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, 95% of the participating Grade 4 students were found to be in schools where instruction is affected by shortages of learning materials in both Science and Math (Mullis et al., 2020). Similarly, the 2019 Southeast Asian Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) results show that at least 1 of 5 of the participating Grade 5 students shared textbooks with another student or more (United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund & Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization [UNICEF & SEAMEO], 2020), suggesting that even if DepEd has reported successful procurement of textbooks for this grade level, the number of available books may still be insufficient. Availability of textbooks may have also been affected by loss or damage in textbooks resulting from natural disasters, or delayed delivery of materials by suppliers.

**FIGURE 6**  
**DepEd’s Budget Utilization for Textbooks**  
**and Other Instructional Materials**



Source: Agency Budget Notes of the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department from FY 2020 to FY 2024

**The delays in the development and distribution of textbooks have been a long-standing concern in the basic education sector.** The report of the first EDCOM already noted the inadequacy of textbooks in basic education. They underscored the complexity of the textbook development process, which, at that time, took 3 years per textbook on average. Textbooks were developed by the Bureau of Secondary Education, approved by the Instructional Materials Council, and then printed and distributed by the Instructional Materials Corporation (IMC), which all operated under the authority of the Secretary of Education (The Congressional Commission on Education, 1991). Three decades later, teachers still report that they are not receiving textbooks on time, resulting in students sharing or rotating books and teachers producing alternative learning materials for their students, sometimes even at their own expense (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 10–11).

Reforms in textbook development and distribution, pursued by both Congress and DepEd, have been ongoing, with RA 8047, enacted in 1995, significantly shaping the landscape by privatizing the publication and distribution of public school textbooks.

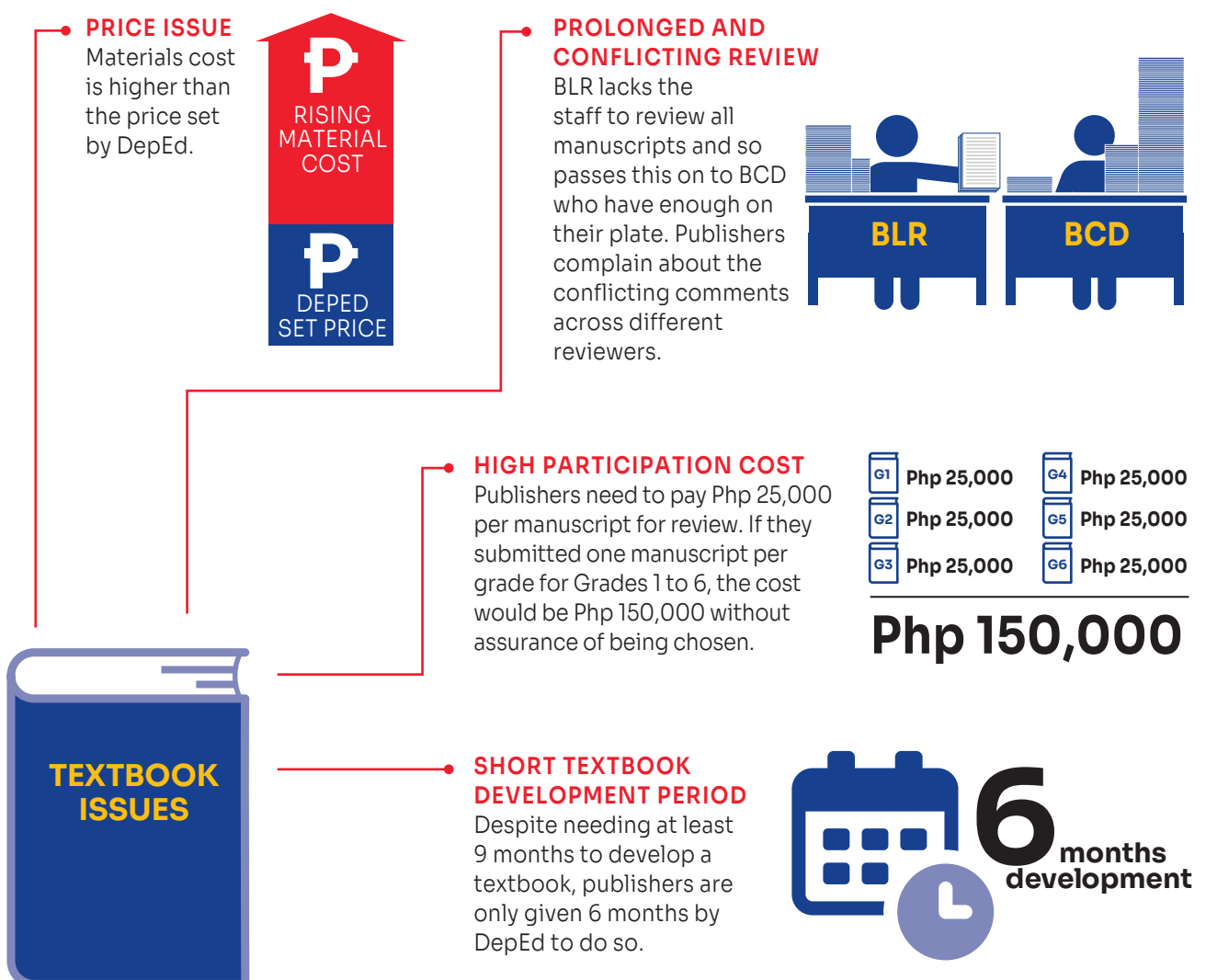
Additionally, DepEd has revised its procurement policy for textbooks and teacher's manuals by acquiring manuscripts separately from the subsequent printing and delivery processes. However, based on EDCOM II's consultations with the National Book Development Board (NBDB) and private publishers (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 1), the complete procurement cycle for a single title can extend over 3 to 5 years.

**In the same consultation, several procurement issues were also identified by private publishers.** Specifically, the following concerns were the most extensively discussed:

- **Insufficient development time.** NBDB shared that the development of textbooks typically takes 18 months, but DepEd often gives only 6 months from the textbook call; hence, publishers would often submit premade drafts with minor revisions to match the requirements set by DepEd. The result is that the manuscripts take longer to edit and revise.
- **High participation costs.** Publishers also lament the steep evaluation fees of Php 25,000.00 per title. For those submitting titles covering Grades 1 to 6 for one subject, the cumulative fees reach Php 150,000.00 without guarantee that their manuscripts will be selected for publication.
- **Prolonged review processes.** An important part of the textbook development process involves reviewing manuscripts at both the selection and finalization stages. However, DepEd lacks dedicated staff in the BLR for this purpose, and instead personnel from the Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD) handle the task alongside their regular duties. Additionally, publishers voiced concerns about receiving conflicting comments from different reviewers.
- **Pricing issues.** Despite imposing higher standards for paper quality and production timelines compared to their private-sector counterparts, DepEd argues that it has less flexibility in adjusting textbook prices. For instance, DepEd explains that they require 70 GSM for newsprint

instead of 50 GSM, which is the common requirement for private school books, because the cycle for replacing textbooks in public schools takes about 5 years. According to the agency, the lack of flexibility in pricing means that for those securing contracts for printing and delivery, the agreed-upon price remains unchanged, even if the costs of materials have increased by the time the contract is awarded. Meanwhile, bidders for manuscripts often bear the burden of covering the professional fees for staff engaged in numerous revisions required by DepEd.

**FIGURE 7**  
**Key Procurement Challenges in Textbook Development**





In a separate consultation with education agencies (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6), a DepEd official also raised the need to hire project management and procurement experts to set up and implement an effective system for the procurement of learning resources.

**When textbooks are not procured, learners and teachers use learners' manuals, self-learning modules, activity sheets, and other locally developed learning resources.** Due to constraints imposed by RA 8047, which prohibits schools from producing their own textbooks, DepEd has previously made efforts to address procurement challenges by creating supplementary learning resources. Notably, during the transition from the Revised Basic Education Curriculum to K to 12, DepEd distributed learners' manuals and teacher guides as interim materials while awaiting the procurement of textbooks. Between 2020 and 2022, DepEd also allocated funds for the production of self-learning modules (SLMs) as part of its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan, which was implemented to ensure access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The production of SLMs was charged against the learning resources under the flexible learning options and did not use the funds allocated for the procurement of textbooks. Although this approach allows for contextualization, the creation of SLMs often falls on teachers, resulting in varying quality assurance mechanisms across regions and divisions. Despite field offices providing training and technical assistance, occasional errors in SLMs necessitated the launch of an Error Watch by DepEd in SY 2020–2021 to address “error reports found on SLMs, other printed materials, DepEd TV, DepEd Commons, and DepEd TV YouTube Channel” (DepEd, 2021).

In EDCOM consultation (EDCOM II, 2023, Jun 1), concerns were raised about teachers extracting content from copyrighted textbooks for SLMs, effectively circumventing RA 8047, as these supplementary learning resources are often treated in schools as substitutes for textbooks.

## Addressing Textbook Development and Distribution Delays

**Both Congress and DepEd have continuously sought to introduce reforms to address the delays in textbook development and distribution.** This report will not be able to describe all these initiatives, but it is worth noting that the passage of RA 8047, or the Book Publishing Industry Development Act, in 1995 is one such policy that shaped the current landscape of textbook development and distribution in the country. It mandated the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (formerly DECS) to “phase out its elementary and secondary textbook publication and distribution functions” and to limit its functions to the setting of minimum standards, the reviewing of manuscripts submitted by private publishers, and assisting in the distribution of books. Transcripts of the discussion of this law in the Senate show that it was crafted primarily to advance the country’s publishing industry through the private sector’s active involvement.

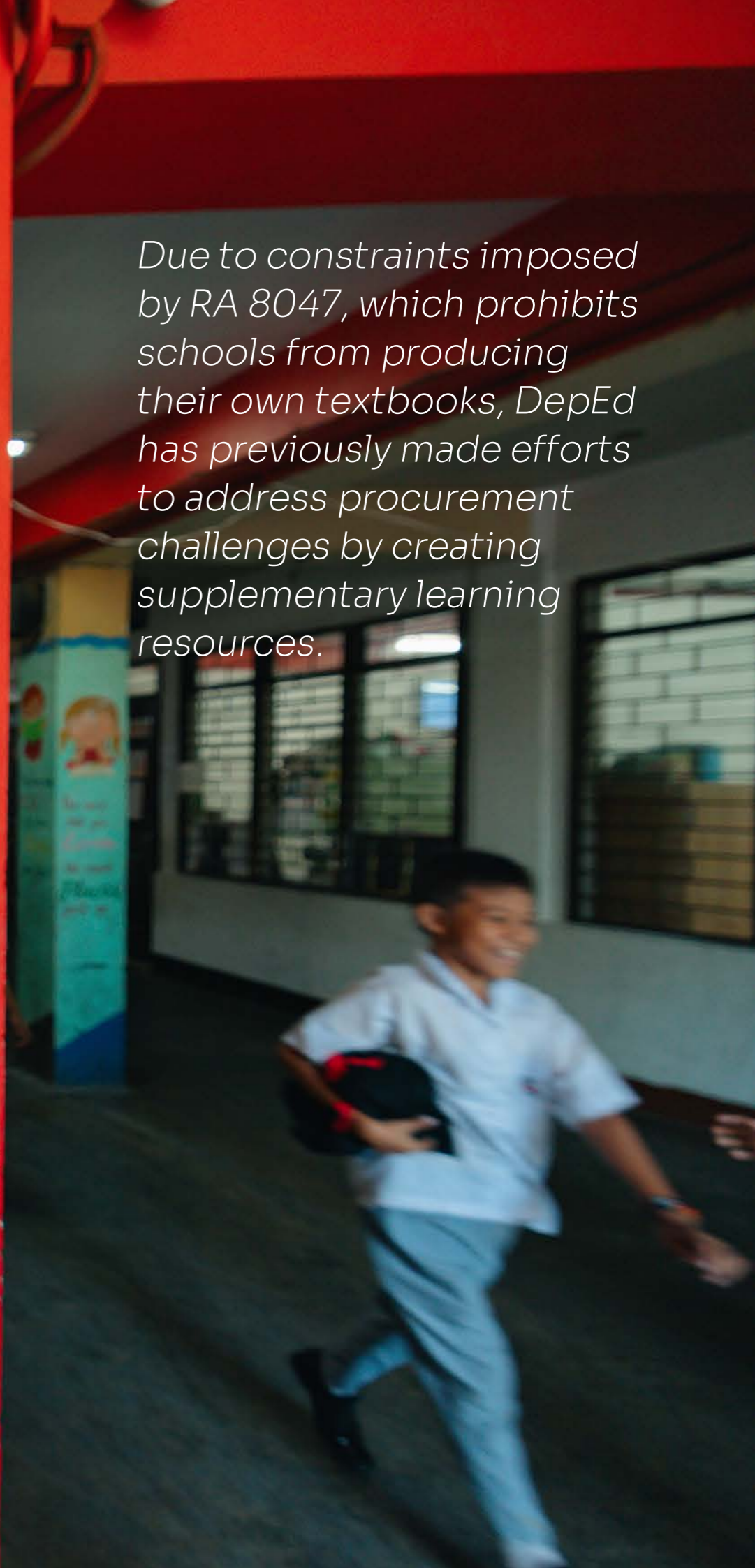
In the discussion, it was highlighted that the government had almost monopolized 90% of the activities of the publishing industry, in particular, with a substantial 70% dedicated to textbook production for elementary and secondary schools. The IMC was solely responsible for developing, printing, and delivering these textbooks. RA 8047 also established NBDB, tasked with developing and implementing a National Book Policy. One of the key objectives of this policy was to address challenges faced by private publishers, including the high prices of paper resulting from heavy taxation on imported paper, aimed at protecting the local paper and ink industry. Simultaneously, the law facilitated tax-free and duty-free importation of finished textbooks to reduce these challenges.

As for DepEd, a key policy shift that has affected the availability of textbooks is the approval of Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) Resolution No. 01-2010, which enabled the adoption of the Manual of Procedures for the Procurement of Manuscripts for Textbooks and Teacher’s Manuals. This manual, the fifth in the series of the department’s Customized Procurement Manuals, succeeded the initial 4 volumes promulgated through GPPB Resolution No. 01-2008 (DepEd Order No. 69, s. 2008). With the introduction of volume 5, DepEd shifted its approach by separately procuring the manuscripts for the subsequent printing and delivery of textbooks.

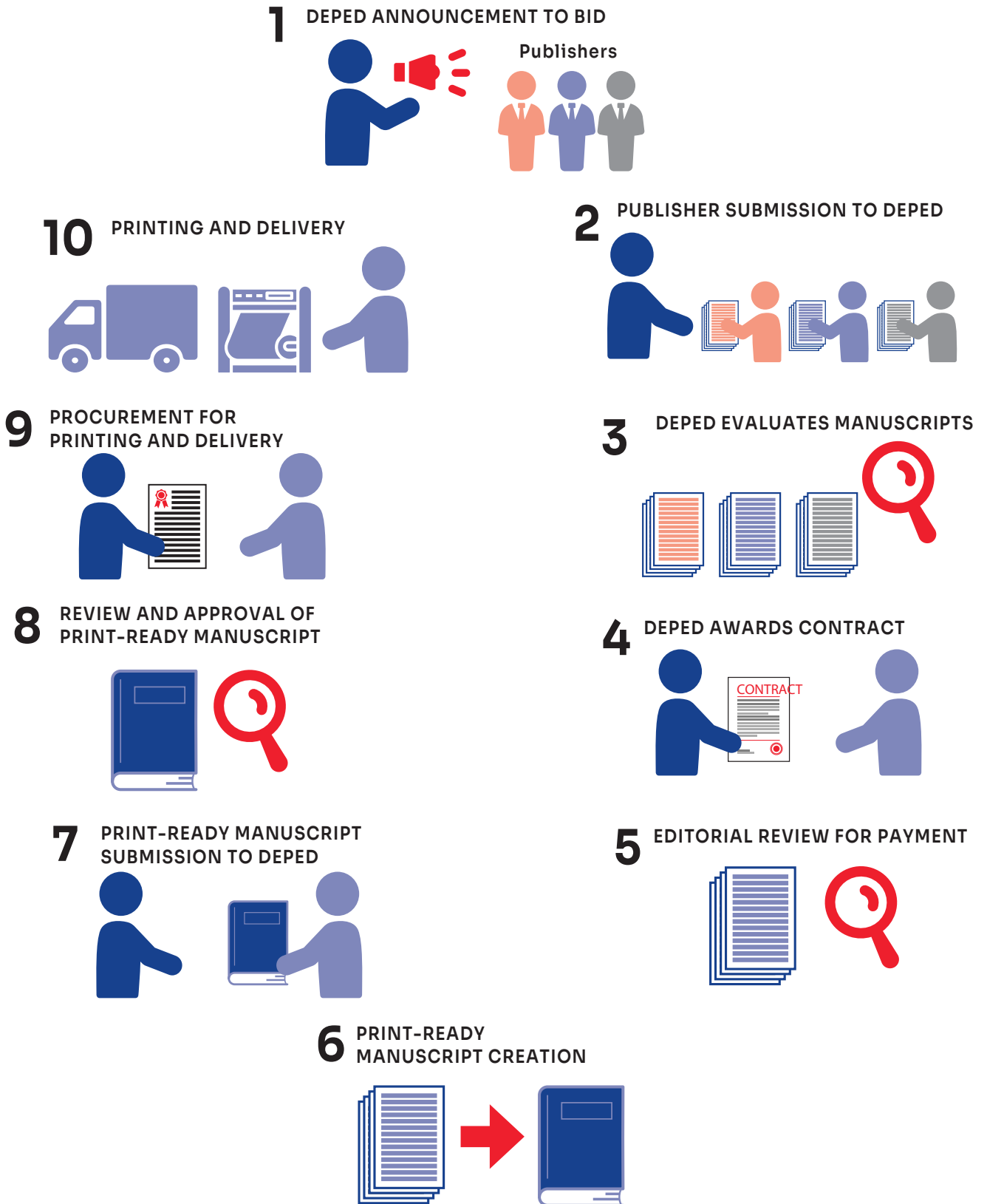
The manuscript procurement starts with a textbook call, similar to the invitation to bid in the procurement of most goods and services. The textbook call outlines the specifications for the manuscripts. Following the submissions, DepEd is tasked with evaluating the manuscripts of each shortlisted bidder before awarding the contract. Subsequently, an editorial review precedes the acceptance of the winning bidder’s manuscript for payment. Notably, the procurement for printing and delivery only starts after the approval of a print-ready version of the manuscript.



Due to constraints imposed by RA 8047, which prohibits schools from producing their own textbooks, DepEd has previously made efforts to address procurement challenges by creating supplementary learning resources.



**FIGURE 8**  
**Manuscript and Textbook Flowchart**



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## Recommendations

**To address these challenges, EDCOM II recommends that DepEd look into the possibility of procuring books that are already available in the market rather than engaging publishers to develop new ones.** DepEd has recently submitted a letter to the GPPB regarding this, and EDCOM II will assist DepEd in coordinating with the GPPB Technical Support Office on this matter and exploring other possible policy options.

Meanwhile, DepEd has issued Department Order (DO) No. 025, s. 2023, to “bundle” the procurement of manuscripts and printing. EDCOM II’s standing committee on basic education continues to mobilize its network of partners and stakeholders to monitor the progress of implementing this policy.

Finally, in various fora, **EDCOM II has urged that DepEd confirm its strategy for ensuring timely textbook procurement for the upcoming school year.** Although private publishers have begun the development of new textbooks that are aligned with the MATATAG curriculum, as of writing DepEd has not yet posted a Bid Notice in Phil GEPS; this step will trigger the procurement of textbooks that will be used for the next year. Given that the estimated duration of the procurement process under the new policy takes one year, DepEd must be prepared to provide alternative teaching and learning resources if it intends to roll out the MATATAG curriculum in SY 2024–2025.

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## Priority 6: Measurement of Learning Outcomes

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Issue: The proliferation of numerous assessment activities in basic education impacts the quality of education and hinders the collection of comprehensive data for analysis.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

EDCOM II also looked into the adequacy of the country's system for the measurement of learning outcomes. According to the National Center on Education and the Economy (2021), assessments are critical for maintaining rigorous and adaptive learning systems. The center finds that in highly effective education systems, assessments perform the following functions:

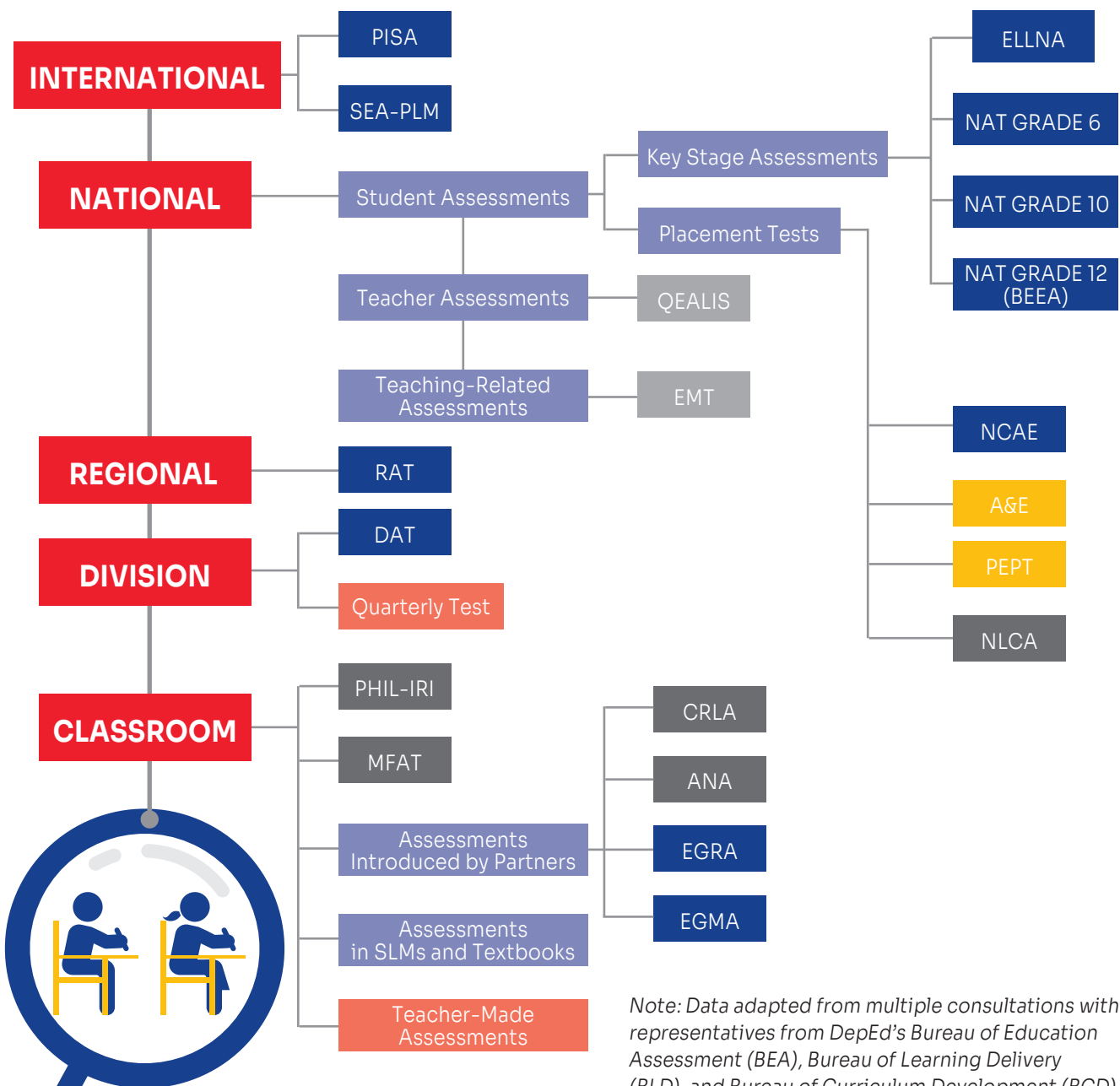
- Measure what students need to be able to do to succeed at the next stage of education or in work and life;
- Develop students' capacity to reason, think critically, and creatively, and apply concepts from many disciplines to address real-world problems;
- Communicate to students and teachers what knowledge and skills are necessary to succeed at the next level of education;
- Enable students to show that they are qualified for the next stage; and
- Give policymakers the ability to track the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of the system's graduates and future workforce

**The primary challenge in the country's assessment system is the lack of access to timely and complete data that stems from an excess of assessment activities in basic education.** In various consultations with teachers, school heads, and other stakeholders, the most frequently cited issue is the lack of access to timely and complete data. However, the lack of access to timely and comprehensive assessment results is not caused by the lack of assessments. One of the key findings of the sub-committee is that there are now too many assessment activities in basic education, and it might be necessary

to rationalize them. In multiple consultations, teachers have lamented that the administration of multiple large-scale assessments on top of regular classroom assessments can be time consuming.

To contextualize, the assessments administered in the Philippines’s public basic education system may be clustered into 5 levels, as illustrated in Figure 9.

**FIGURE 9**  
**Mapping of Assessments Administered in Basic Education**



*Note: Data adapted from multiple consultations with representatives from DepEd’s Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA), Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD), and Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD) (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 14; 2023, Oct 23). This is not a comprehensive mapping of all assessment activities.*

The management of large-scale assessments, both on the international and national fronts, is overseen by the DepEd Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA). Internationally, the SEA-PLM for the elementary levels and PISA for the secondary levels are administered once every 3 years, following the standards and procedures set by the respective organizing bodies. At the national level, key stage exit assessments, such as the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA) for Grade 3 and the NAT for Grades 6, 10, and 12 are conducted annually.

BEA is also responsible for student placement assessments, such as the Philippine Educational Placement Test, the National Career Assessment Examination, and the pen-and-paper component of the Accreditation and Equivalency test. Recently, BEA was also in charge of the National Learning Camp Assessment (NLCA).

Moreover, field offices administer their own assessments. Contrary to the national assessments, regional- and division-level assessments lack standardized policy guidelines, resulting in varying frequencies and processes across regions and administrations.

Classroom-level assessments, typically handled by teachers, fall under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD). While teachers prepare, administer, correct, and process these assessments, schools may also opt to conduct local initiatives or collaborate with external stakeholders for additional support. Beyond teacher-made assessments, diagnostic tools like the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and the Multi-Factored Assessment Tool (MFAT) are used, along with assessments introduced by education partners, such as the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) and the Amplified Numeracy Assessment. It is worth noting that the Early Grades Mathematics Assessment and the Early Grades Reading Assessments are system assessments (DepEd Order No. 57, s. 2017) that have been administered for 3 consecutive school years (SY)—SY 2015–2016 (Grade 1), SY 2016–2017 (Grade 2) and SY 2017–2018 (Grade 3) to evaluate the implementation of the Mother Tongue–Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE); nevertheless, in EDCOM II consultations, teachers shared that they have also used these tools for diagnostic and progress monitoring purposes (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 10–11). Additionally, assessments embedded in SLMs and textbooks/learners' manuals are also considered classroom assessments (see Table 1).



**TABLE 1**  
**Classroom Assessments Administered at Scale**

Assessment	Original Purpose	Who Takes the Test	Schedule of Administration
<b>Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI)</b>	Measure and describe students' reading performance to guide reading interventions	Grades 3–6 (all learners)	Start and end of school year
<b>MFAT</b>	Identify learners with special needs  Gather information on learners' strengths, needs, learning styles, and other educational concerns	Grade 1 (all learners)	Start of the school year
<b>CRLA</b>	Determine the reading profiles of learners to guide the development of appropriate reading instructional strategies.  Identify children who need additional support in reading	Grades 1–3	Start of the school year
<b>EGRA</b>	Assess foundational literacy of children in their mother tongue  Track the progress of learning over time	Kindergarten–Grade 3	Start of the school year
<b>EGMA</b>	Measure the primary numeracy and mathematics skills in the mother tongue	Kindergarten–Grade 3	Start of the school year

Source: Adapted from DepEd Order No. 014, s. 2018; DepEd Order No. 029, s. 2018; and DepEd Order No. 57, s. 2016

Classroom assessments, like quizzes, performance tasks, and quarterly exams, measure individual learners' progress in mastering curriculum competencies. In general, these assessments are developed, curated, and administered by teachers and may be used for either or both formative or summative purposes. However, there are also assessment tools that are introduced by DepEd as part of a specific program or intervention; these assessment tools include the Phil-IRI, MFAT, and CRLA. Often, these assessments are diagnostic tools that may guide teachers in implementing learning interventions such as remediation programs or may inform them if learners need additional support. External partners may also introduce classroom assessment tools as a means to monitor interventions and projects that they have provided for schools.

Meanwhile, system assessments are implemented to ascertain if the entire education system is meeting its goals. DepEd Order No. 29, s. 2017, outlines the purposes of the data derived from these assessments as follows:

- Establishing baselines for the basic education system and the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in schools in terms of teaching and learning;
- Monitoring the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in schools in terms of teaching and learning;
- Measuring the effectiveness of instructional reforms that are part of the K to 12 basic education program;
- Generating reliable data for purposes of international benchmarking;
- Providing bases for the improvement of programs for learner development, curriculum implementation, and school effectiveness; and
- Providing evidence that will aid policy formulation, planning, and programming at the division, regional, and national levels

**Through consultations and a thorough examination of DepEd policy documents, it is evident that international, national, and regional assessment activities were primarily intended as system assessments.** This stands in contrast to the purpose of classroom assessments, which are geared toward measuring the individual learners' progress in mastering specific competencies. System assessments, on the other hand, are designed to evaluate the achievement of broader goals within the education system or the jurisdiction undertaking the test, especially in the case of regional and division assessments.

**Additionally, maintaining a wide array of system assessments was not the policy direction of DepEd.** Upon introducing the K to 12 curriculum, DepEd mandated discontinuing regional achievement tests and division achievement tests through DO 7, s. 2012. In their place, only the NAT "shall be the sole assessment tool that will be recognized in measuring the performance of pupils and students attributing to the performance of individual schools, municipalities, congressional districts, schools, city divisions, provinces, and regions." This policy was only lifted in 2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the NAT could not be administered for logistical reasons.



**However, the regional assessment, considered as a necessary alternative to national key stage assessments like the NAT, often experiences delays or incomplete administration.** These issues render the results unusable for the field offices striving to establish a solid foundation for effective interventions and policies. Interestingly, in the focus group discussion hosted by EDCOM (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 14), the 3 regions represented, namely, DepEd National Capital Region, Cordillera Administrative Region, and Region III, reported administering at least 1 regional assessment every school year from SY 2021–2022.

Another issue that should be addressed pertains to the survey’s reliance on the self-reporting of basic literacy by a single household member, as highlighted by Albert (2021). The inherent bias introduced through self-reporting can potentially lead to inflated results.

Moreover, the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) automatically categorizes individuals who have completed high school under the old curriculum or at least junior high school under the K to 12 curriculum as functionally literate. This automated classification seems problematic, particularly in light of the issues related to grading practices and “mass promotion.” This aspect might partially explain the paradoxical situation where the Philippines maintains high rates of basic and functional literacy but demonstrates subpar performance in international large-scale assessments.

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## Recommendations

**The Committee proposes that teachers undergo training to be equipped with the skills to choose and utilize tools that are most suitable for the context of their learners.** This proposal arises from the belief that standardizing the conduct of classroom assessments is unnecessary.

**In addition to the assessments outlined in Table 1, FLEMMS must also be reviewed.** Conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) every 5 years since 1994, this survey aims to assess the basic and functional literacy rates and the educational skills and qualifications of the general population. While it is regularly conducted by the PSA, and its framework and results are published and widely disseminated, preliminary research shows that the results of the FLEMMS are not used by DepEd for planning curricular interventions. One possible reason is that the definitions of basic and functional literacy measured by the FLEMMS do not necessarily match the literacies measured by DepEd.

Issue: Interconnected issues in the national assessment system encompass language mismatches, procurement challenges, alignment concerns, limited reporting results, integrity of test administration, and staffing constraints within BEA.

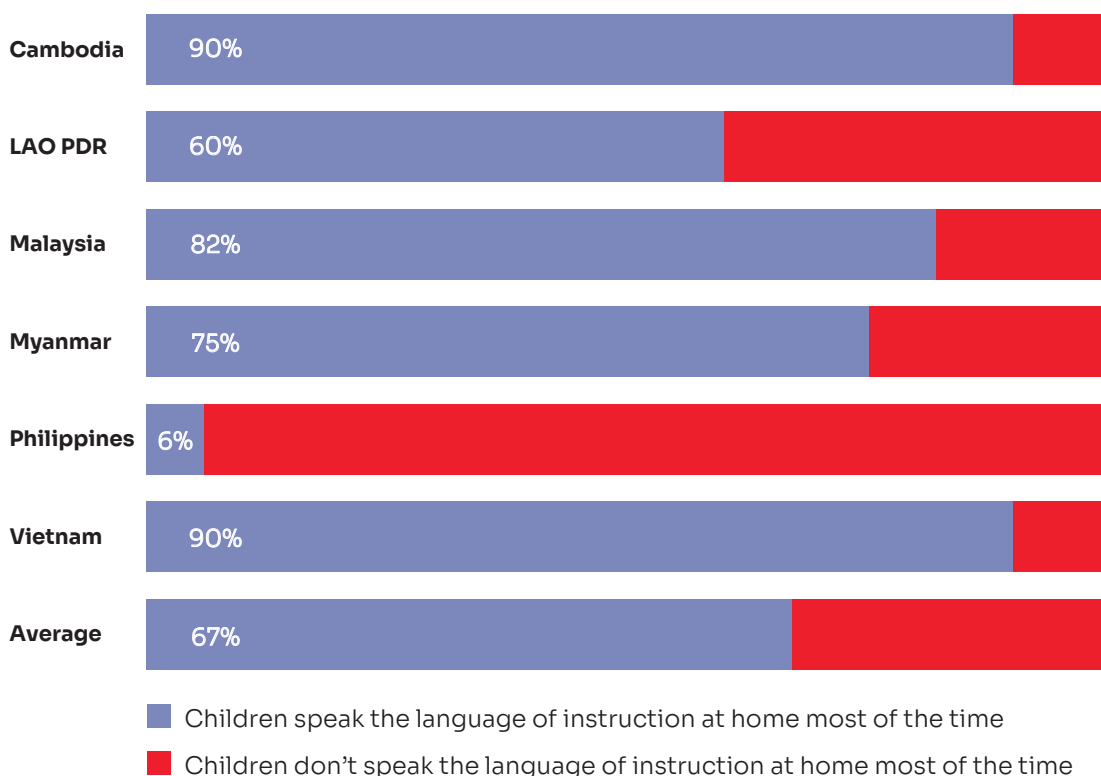
## EDCOM II Findings

**There is a high mismatch between the language learners use at home and the language of testing for international large-scale assessments (ILSAs).** Thus far, all the cycles of ILSAs participated in by the Philippines were in English.

Notably, in SEA-PLM 2019, the Philippines was the only country that took the test in English, even though 93% of the students who took the test did not regularly speak English at home. Similarly, in PISA 2018, Filipino students took the test in English; it was found in the same test that 94% of 15-year-old Filipino students primarily speak a language other than English at home. This is the second-highest level of language mismatch among the participating countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019).

## FIGURE 10

### Language of Instruction and Testing at Home: SEA-PLM 2019 Learner Demographics Report



Source: SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report

During a consultation (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 14), representatives from BEA, being the national center for ILSA, explained that their decision to use English as the language of testing for ILSAs aligns with the technical standards, which mandate the official language of instruction. They deemed it the most efficient choice, citing the time and cost involved in translating and adapting questionnaires. However, various groups raised their concerns, pointing out that although English is the official language of instruction, students often do not gain mastery of it. Consequently, in practice, teachers and learners may resort to code-switching, using Filipino and/or their mother tongue.

Given that ILSAs are critical system assessments for the country's basic education system, the Committee emphasizes the significance of ensuring that proficiency in the language of testing does not hinder the measurement of the literacies these tests are designed to evaluate. More importantly, DepEd should consider the results of the recent ILSAs as valuable feedback for evaluating and potentially revising the current language policy, as elaborated in a separate section on curriculum and instruction.

**Another key finding from the consultations is that procurement-related problems often cause delays in test administration.** To contextualize, Figure 5 illustrates the extent of the delays in the administration of key stage assessments from SY 2016–2017 to SY 2022–2023. During this period, based on the prevailing DepEd policy, 27 key stage assessments should have been administered, 13 of which were administered late, and 11 were not administered at all due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related procurement challenges.

The procurement challenges are significant because, except for the test development and the proctoring of the exams, which are facilitated by DepEd personnel, the rest of the test administration is outsourced. The contract is divided into 3 lots, as indicated in Table 2.



**TABLE 2****Description of Contract Lots for National Assessments**

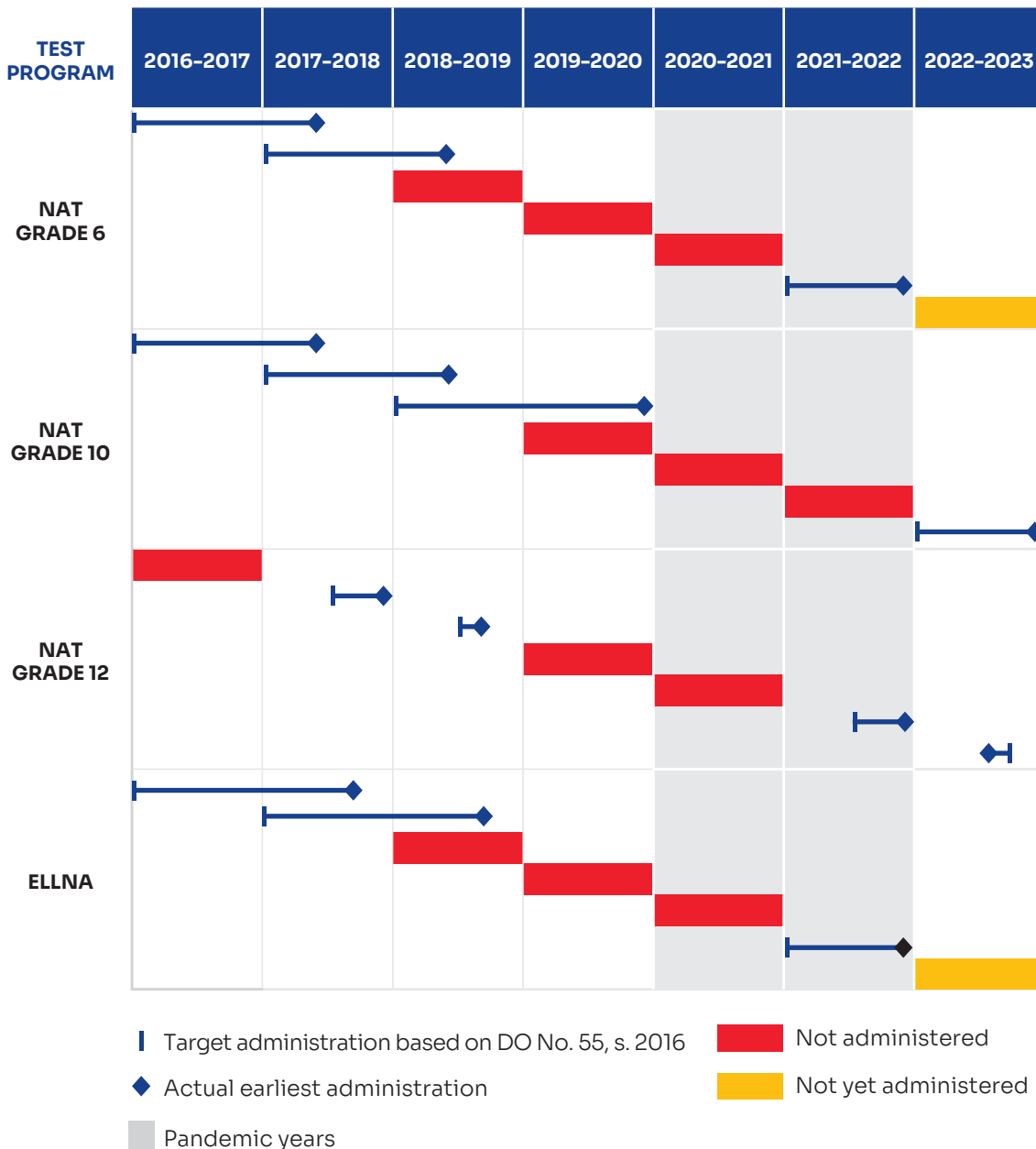
Lot No.	Description
1	Quarantine Printing, Packaging, Labeling, and Warehousing of Test Booklets and Nonclassified Materials
2	Scanning of Answer Sheets and Processing of Test Results
3	Delivery and Retrieval of Test Materials, Nonclassified Materials, and Answer Sheets

According to BEA, very few vendors have been bidding for these 3 lots in recent years, especially for Lots 1 and 2. The first lot is challenging for many printing suppliers because of the quarantine requirement, i.e., upon the printing of the materials, the staff in the vicinity of the printing and warehousing facility will not be allowed to leave the building to prevent them from possibly leaking the test. Another challenge is the low pricing of the contract, which they claim is unattractive to vendors. While BEA tries to reach out to potential suppliers for the market survey, it rarely receives responses. Thus, consistent with prevailing GPPB guidelines, DepEd would use “existing price data of the agency” as the basis for the computation of the approved budget for the contract. Specifically, it has been the practice in DepEd to refer to the BLR’s costing for the price of paper and other materials; BEA argues that these prices are too low for most vendors. Additionally, the limited number of vendors often bid for multiple projects at the same time. In particular, BEA manages 12 assessment programs every year, and if the same bidders win for most of these programs, timelines for the delivery of each project may also be affected.

Finally, BEA cites several bureaucratic delays in processing procurement documents internally (DepEd, 2023, Aug 22). These delays include the repetitive reviews of bidding documents within divisions of the Procurement Management Service, the failure of signatories to comply with operational procurement timelines, the frequent reconstitution of the Bids and Awards Committee due to the resignation of members, and accomplishing multiple procurement forms and documents that contain duplicate questions.



**FIGURE 11**  
**Timeline of Administration of National Assessments**  
**from SY 2016–2017 to SY 2022–2023**



Note: Dates for the table were obtained from the following sources: DM No. 001, s. 2023; DM No. 033, s. 2020; DM No. 034, s. 2023; DM No. 068, s. 2018; DM No. 146, s. 2017; DM No. 146, s. 2018; DO 027, s. 2022, and a press release: <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2018/06/29/statement-on-the-schedule-of-nat-12-for-sy-2017-2018/>.

These delays in the procurement process subsequently affect the timelines for test administration, analysis of the results, and reporting. As illustrated in Figure 11, the tests that pushed through for the past 7 school years are often administered at the end of the school year; thus, when the results are released, they are no longer useful for “determining if learners are meeting the learning standards” and in “helping provide information to improve instructional practices” (DepEd, 2016, p. 8).

**National assessments need to be more explicitly aligned with the intended curriculum.** For national assessments, BEA follows a test development process that is articulated in DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016 (see Figure 12). The entire process is managed by BEA, and its sole interface with other units in the curriculum and instruction strand is during the development of the table of specifications,<sup>1</sup> which is revised only when there are significant changes in the intended curriculum. While the item writers and validators also refer to the curriculum guide, the process does not allow for a thorough checking of the alignment between the implemented and tested curricula using the actual test items.

**Related to the issue of ensuring the quality of the national assessments is the reporting of the results.** Following the test administration, BEA handles data analysis and report preparation, while the supplier for Lot 2 of the contract handles initial data processing. The results of the tests are sent directly to school principals, but regional directors may request the same from BEA. External stakeholders, such as researchers, may also request school-level data, subject to the requirements indicated in DO 55, s. 2016. However, BEA’s interpretation of the policy has prompted it to limit the report to mean percentage scores only. Data on the psychometric properties of the test, such as the table of specifications, as well as the item analysis, item response, and profile of the test takers derived from the Examinee’s Descriptive Questionnaire, are not released, even to internal stakeholders. Ironically, DO 55, s. 2016, requires that internal and external stakeholders who will utilize assessment data “shall not compare regions, divisions, schools, and

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<sup>1</sup> According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Australian Council for Educational Research (2023), the table of specifications (TOS), may be defined as “a description of how the test will be constructed, including the details of the proportion of items that will assess different learning domains and skills and the response formats.”

examinees without taking into consideration other variables that may have a substantial effect on the outcome of the assessments.” All of these factors limit the utilization of assessment data and make it difficult to make robust analyses that may be useful for decision-makers.

**FIGURE 12**  
**Process Flow for National Assessments**



*Note: Adapted from DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016, Policy Guidelines on the National Assessment of Student Learning for the K to 12 Basic Education Program, and from consultations with the Bureau of Education Assessment (EDCOM II, Nov 14).*

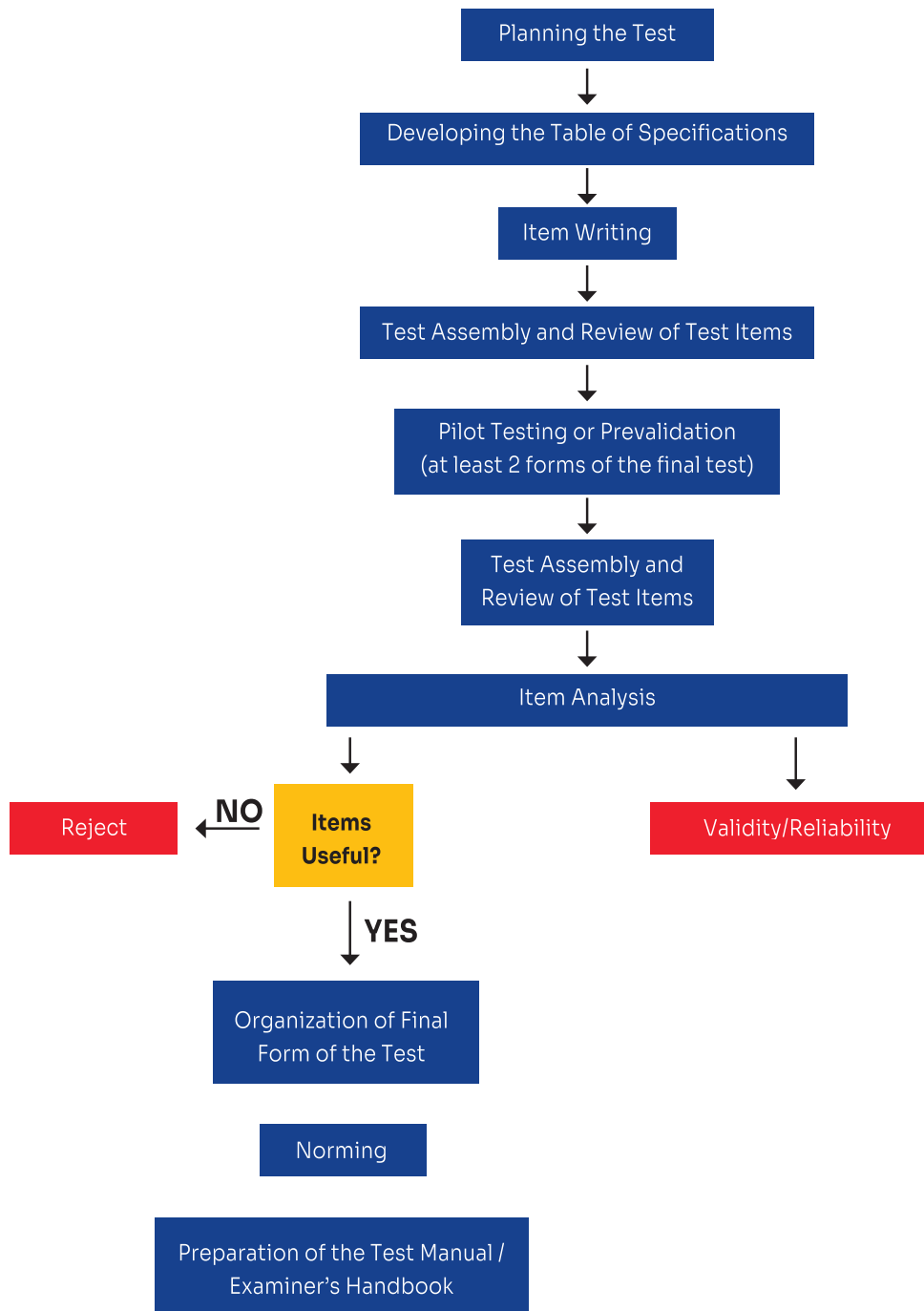


**Another recurring concern raised during consultations is the integrity of test administration.** While BEA is in charge of the overall management of tests, it is worth noting that issues related to the integrity of test administration are left to the teachers, principals, and DepEd personnel in the field to address. Protocols are in place, and personnel are trained to prevent fraudulent activities. However, the lack of a clear process and dedicated staff for monitoring and holding personnel, students, and stakeholders accountable makes it difficult to ensure integrity. In one of the consultations with representatives from BEA, Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD), and Bureau of Curriculum Development (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 14), it was raised that field personnel are more likely to try to resolve any test administration issues at the field level than to raise them to BEA because they would not want to be held accountable for such issues.

**Underlying the issues mentioned is the question of whether BEA can fulfill its mandate with the existing staff.** The bureau currently has a total of 55 regular and coterminous positions, with 19 of these remaining unfilled. These vacant positions are anticipated to handle technical tasks and are categorized at Salary Grade 15 or above (see Figure 13).

**FIGURE 13**

**Test Development Process for National Assessments,  
as Explained in DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016**



Source: DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016, Policy Guidelines on the National Assessment of Student Learning for the K to 12 Basic Education Program

During the focus group discussion with BEA, it was raised that the bureau will need more statisticians and information systems analysts to be able to deliver their mandate. However, the agency is unable to attract quality applicants due to noncompetitive salaries. For instance, the Statistician II position is at Salary Grade 15 (Php 36,619.00 monthly), while requiring civil service eligibility, one year of related work experience, and 4 hours of relevant training. Meanwhile, the private sector may offer the same salaries to fresh graduates.

However, EDCOM's analysis of data from the 2022 Occupational Wages Survey shows that the salary of the Statistician II position is above the mean (Php 31,917.83) and median (Php 30,805.00) values of the average monthly wage rate of statisticians across the surveyed industries. Thus, other factors such as inefficient recruitment and hiring processes, lack of career progression opportunities, and lack of professional development opportunities may also be affecting the hiring and retention of personnel in the bureau.

Moreover, it is also important to highlight the absence of a talent pool from educational measurement programs that the bureau can readily tap into. Data from the Commission on Higher Education underscores this challenge, revealing that out of the country's 2,396 higher education institutions, merely 4 offer master's programs linked to educational assessment. These programs, situated exclusively in Metro Manila at De La Salle University Manila, Miriam College, Philippine Normal University–Main, and University of the Philippines–Diliman, have consistently exhibited low enrollment rates and have produced an average of only seven graduates annually from 2005 to 2023. A tracer study conducted by Miriam College reveals that their graduates, comprising educators, administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors from both private and public educational institutions, typically assume leadership roles as supervisors and administrators in their respective schools. Surprisingly, their career trajectories seldom lead them to consider employment within BEA.

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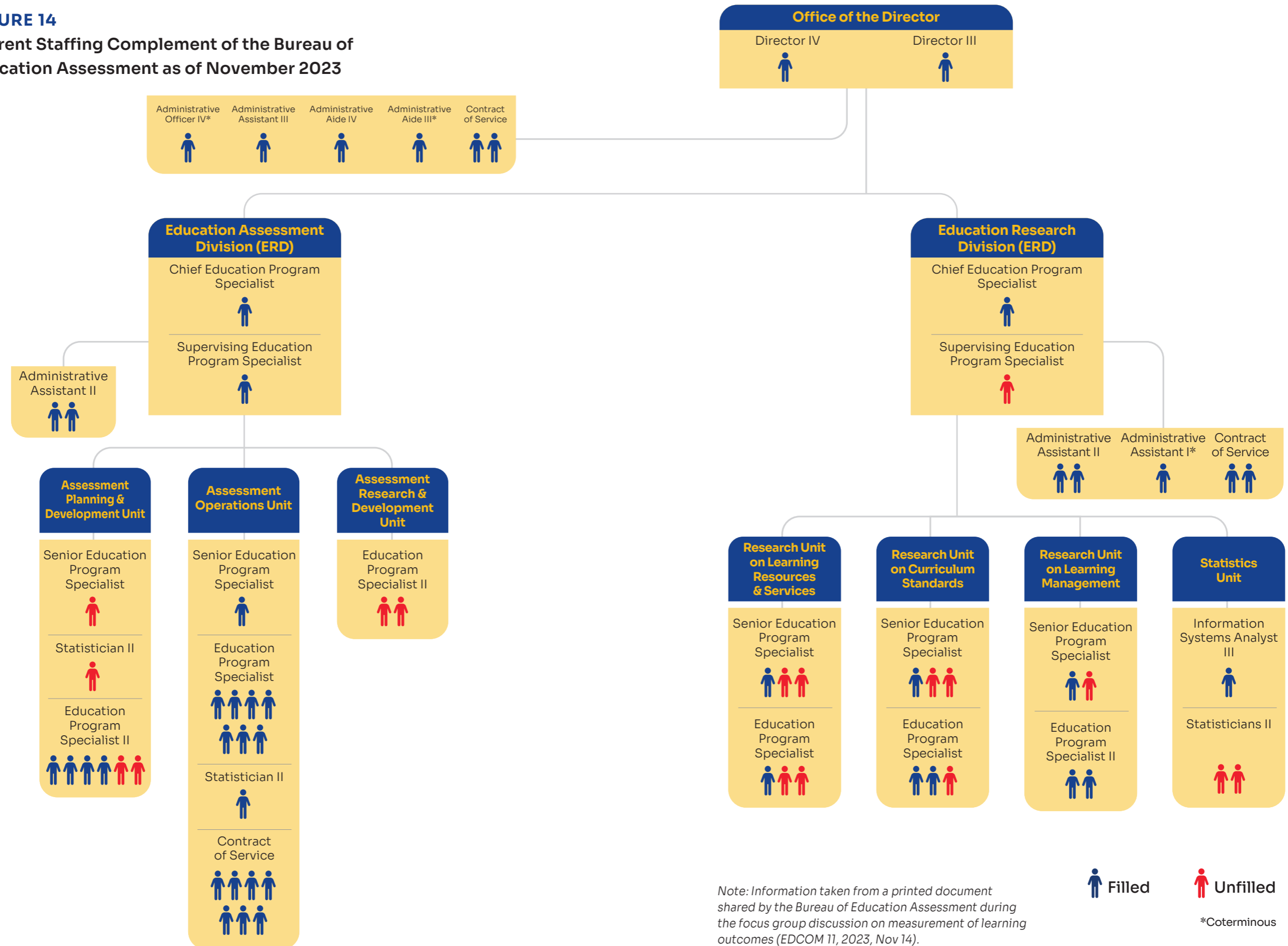
## Recommendations

**To address these issues, EDCOM II proposes that, as a temporary measure, DepEd streamline the current assessment landscape in basic education.**

The recommendation involves developing a cohesive, unified assessment framework that comprehensively encompasses all levels of assessments, as opposed to maintaining separate assessment policies lacking clear and explicit alignment. Additionally, the Commission recommends discouraging the implementation of standardized assessments at the regional and division levels, provided that DepEd can assure the consistent administration and timely release of results for national key stage assessments, such as the NAT and ELLNA. Instead, the focus for field offices should shift toward strengthening the alignment among the intended, implemented, and tested curricula.

**EDCOM II further recommends that efforts be poured into modernizing test administration, emphasizing investment in essential components such as infrastructure, staffing, and training that are vital for the successful implementation of computer-based assessments.** This strategic shift aims to alleviate a multitude of procurement challenges associated with traditional paper-based tests, encompassing issues in printing, warehousing, forwarding, and logistics. Moreover, the adoption of a computer-based assessment system holds the potential to enhance data collection and analysis, ensuring prompt release and analysis of assessment results. This will also build on the initial efforts of DepEd in piloting the computer-based NAT and PEPT. The agency is also currently designing a dashboard to enable stakeholders to more easily access national assessment data. In the interim, it might be necessary to conduct market research to address supply-side procurement issues.

**FIGURE 14**  
**Current Staffing Complement of the Bureau of**  
**Education Assessment as of November 2023**







**Moreover, EDCOM II supports the expansion of the staffing complement within BEA and emphasizes the need for implementing comprehensive training and mentoring programs.**

Staffing complement should include more high-level administrative personnel dedicated to procurement, data analysts, statisticians with elevated salary grades, and communication specialists. Additionally, the Commission underscores the importance of training and mentoring programs targeting teaching and nonteaching staff, as well as school leaders, focusing on enhancing assessment and data literacy.

Within the duration of EDCOM II, the sub-committee will also continue to study proposals to create an independent body that can oversee the development, administration, and reporting of education assessments. One resource that will be considered in this review is the report *Improving Learning Outcomes for the Philippines (ILO-PH)*, a USAID-funded project that has provided a comparison of independent and nonindependent institutional arrangements for assessment bodies (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**Comparison of Independent and Nonindependent**  
**Institutional Arrangements for Assessment Bodies**

Unit structure	Advantages	Disadvantages	Examples
<b>Independent</b>	<p>Considered to have less political bias and therefore more integrity</p> <p>Independence in reporting results, especially from political interference and interests</p> <p>May be better placed to administer some kinds of assessment; for example, high stakes qualifications</p> <p>Increased capacity to hire technical experts due to higher pay scales</p>	<p>More distant from policymakers and less able to engage on policy matters</p> <p>Less public accountability to quality of assessments and action on results</p> <p>Higher costs and overheads to maintain as separate body</p> <p>Decisions may not be backed by government</p>	<p>Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Australia</p> <p>Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), United Kingdom</p>
<b>Non-independent</b>	<p>Close linkages to key areas of education policy and curriculum development*</p> <p>Clearer understanding of the problems and challenges within the context of the learning system</p> <p>Greater access to departmental resources to administer tests</p>	<p>Higher risk of “embargoing” data or being reluctant to release to the public if results are not favorable</p> <p>May be more prone to political interference</p>	<p>Bureau of Education Assessments (BEA), Philippines</p> <p>Department of Examination and Centralised Assessment Unit, Brunei Darussalam</p> <p>Education Quality Assurance Department (EQAD), Cambodia</p> <p>Standards and Testing Agency (STA), United Kingdom</p> <p>Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB), Singapore*</p>

Notes:

\* While SEAB is under the purview of the Ministry of Education (MoE), it has its own board and management team. However, SEAB’s board includes a senior official from MoE and is chaired by the Advisor of MoE.

\*\* In some instances, e.g., Australia’s ACARA, independent units may also hold responsibility for curriculum development.

The data presented in this figure is derived from an unpublished report by ILO-PH titled “Briefing Paper on Education Assessment Units,”- prepared by Delivery Associates and submitted by RTI International on July 11, 2022.

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## Priority 7: Curriculum and Instruction

Under this priority area, EDCOM II has focused on 3 issues that are most relevant to recent policy developments, namely, (a) validation of the revised K to 10 curriculum (i.e., the MATATAG curriculum), (b) language of instruction, and (c) learning loss recovery.

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**Issue: Congestion and challenges in the implementation of the revised K to 10 curriculum include concerns related to the spiral progression approach and the practical difficulties for teachers in delivering the curriculum as intended.**

### **EDCOM II Findings**

By the end of SY 2017–2018, DepEd partnered with the Assessment Curriculum and Technology Research Centre (ACTRC) to assess the K to 12 curriculum. The aim of the study was to collect evidence guiding future curriculum and policy decisions and to enhance the ability of DepEd bureaus to independently conduct thorough reviews. According to ACTRC (2021), the project focused on 4 main curriculum components: (a) the intended curriculum, (b) the implemented curriculum, (c) the tested curriculum, and (d) the attained curriculum and the degree of alignment between these components. Key findings of the review included congestion of curriculum content, misplacement of prerequisite learning competencies, and imbalance of cognitive demand. These results prompted the curriculum revision process.

As part of this revision process, DepEd unveiled its new draft curriculum guides to the public on April 19, 2023. To participate in this process, EDCOM II conducted a consultation workshop with teachers from public and private schools nationwide (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 10–11). The main insights are:

- **Teachers welcome the efforts of the DepEd to decongest the curriculum.** In 6 of the 15 breakout sessions (where teachers are grouped by key stage), teachers noted that the revised curriculum is less congested and has an improved progression of competencies compared to the previous version.
- **Teachers still found the curriculum guides congested in some subject areas, noting that some competencies are repeated instead of progressing from the simple to the more complex.** Given these issues, they have identified priority areas that should be given more time.
- Science and English teachers also raised concerns about the **spiral progression approach**.
  - Although the Science shaping paper does not explicitly refer to the spiral progression as a pedagogical approach, the curriculum guide still organizes the competencies to focus on one discipline per quarter. For example, Key Stage 3 teachers observed that the abrupt change in topics per quarter makes it difficult for students to master the content and sustain their interest. Further, this approach conflicts with the preservice training of teachers, in which they specialize in one discipline only. **Teachers propose that DepEd return to a “one discipline per grade level” approach in the organization of the curriculum guide.**
  - The spiral progression is identified as a key pedagogical approach in the English shaping paper. While teachers agree that this approach is appropriate for the subject area, they also raised the need for clear articulation and mastery of the foundational competencies for the spiraling approach to work. In addition, the number of competencies and the time allotted to cover them hinder the learners’ mastery of prerequisite competencies. Thus, **teachers in this key stage demand a clear vertical articulation and a reduction in the number of competencies.**

Further, the teachers shared the many challenges they face in implementation. Some of the most frequently raised issues include:

- Teachers frequently find themselves compelled to move on to the next topics outlined in the curriculum guide and budget of work across key stages, despite assessing that a majority of their students have not mastered the current topics. They consider it their responsibility to go through all of the topics prescribed for the quarter, as the quarterly or periodic assessments, often prepared at the division level, will cover all of them.
- The recommended teaching and learning approaches specified in the shaping papers of the new curriculum generally align with the teachers' preferred approaches. However, they have also identified factors affecting their ability to deliver their lessons according to these approaches, such as limited time for preparation and actual instruction, incomplete learning resources, and limited facilities.

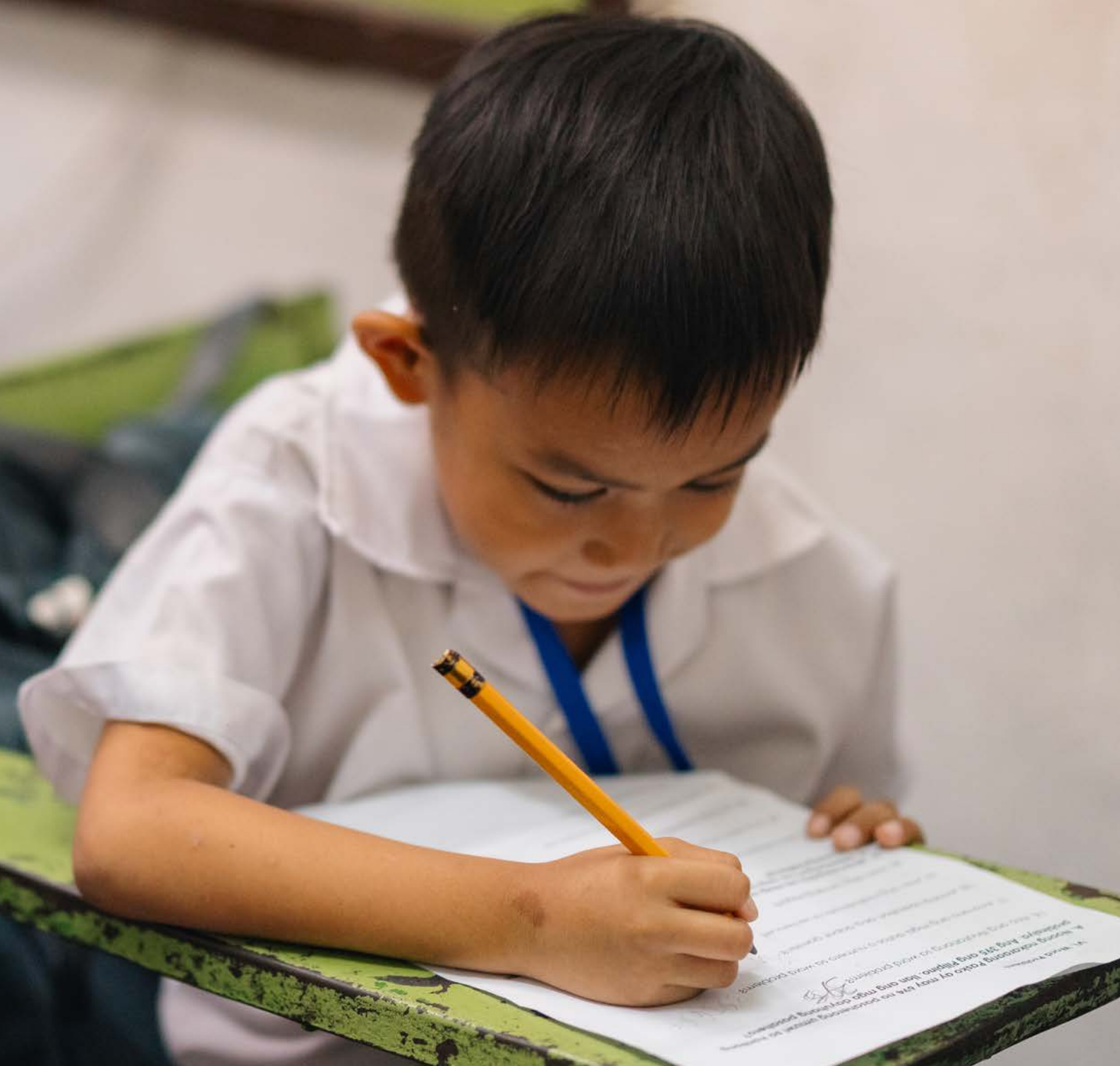
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## Recommendations

**EDCOM II strongly recommends DepEd to address the aforementioned issues hindering teachers from delivering quality instruction as the revised curriculum is set to be implemented.** These recommendations were conveyed to DepEd through a letter dated July 24, 2023 (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 24). DepEd formally responded to the points raised by EDCOM II on September 5, 2023.

Currently, DepEd is conducting a pilot of the new curriculum for Kindergarten as well as Grades 1, 4, and 7 in 35 schools across 7 regions. While the pilot is underway, EDCOM II has raised in various discussions that there are key preparations for full implementation that DepEd should prioritize. These preparations include teacher training and the development and distribution of learning resources. During consultations with DepEd (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 23), it was found that the pilot schools lack textbooks and are relying on lesson exemplars and loose activity sheets. Considering that the time required for the publication of textbooks takes at least a year, as discussed earlier, EDCOM II recommends that DepEd formulate a contingency plan to ensure that teachers and learners will have adequate learning resources by the upcoming school year.

*During consultations with DepEd, it was found that the pilot schools lack textbooks and are relying on lesson exemplars and loose activity sheets (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 23).*



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Issue: Effectively addressing learning loss is compounded by the voluntary nature of DepEd's recovery program camp participation, limiting its reach to learners in need of remediation, along with issues related to baseline and endline assessments for progress tracking and a lack of detailed policies for the other components of the recovery program.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

The global COVID-19 pandemic led to extended school closures worldwide, with an average duration of 79 days, according to UNICEF (2021). In the case of the Philippines, schools remained closed for over a year. Despite the implementation of various distance learning modalities, the consequential learning loss required systematic intervention.

In response to this, as well as to address the low performance of its learners in international large-scale assessments and national assessments, DepEd launched the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP) through DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2023. The NLRP consists of 5 subprograms, the details of which are summarized in Table 4.

**From the 3 schools that implemented learning camps, EDCOM II observed that learners and teachers appreciated the camps.** Teachers found that interactive learning strategies are easier to conduct with smaller class sizes (35 at most) and with readily available learning materials, as DepEd developed the materials at the central office level with assistance from external partners. Specifically, the refresher on previous lessons was able to boost learners' confidence and readiness for the upcoming school year. Meanwhile, the biweekly learning action cells gave teachers time to strategize and collaborate.

**However, it was also found that learning camps may not be reaching the learners who needed the remediation most.** To contextualize, it is important to highlight that participation in learning camps is voluntary for both teachers and learners, occurring during the end-of-school-year break. Because of this, some learners, particularly those requiring remediation, may choose not to participate. An example from Taguig National High School revealed that the intervention camp did not proceed because parents did not permit learners with grades below 75 in Math and/or English to participate.

**TABLE 4****Components of the National Learning Recovery Program as of December 31, 2023**

Component	General Description	Implementation Schedule	Assessment Tool	Grade Levels Covered
<b>National Learning Camp (NLC)</b>	Learners join either (a) an enhancement, (b) a consolidation, or (c) an intervention camp to prepare for the upcoming school year.  Teachers also have learning action cells at the start and end of the week.	During the end-of-school-year break, for 5 weeks	National Learning Camp Assessment (pretest and posttest)	All grade levels but phased implementation  SY 2022–2023: Grades 7 and 8  SY 2023–2024: Grades 7–10
<b>National Reading Program (NRP)</b>	Reading literacy development program for all grade levels	During the school year as part of literacy, language, and text curriculum (in place of the mother tongue subject for Key Stage 1)	Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA)	All grade levels
<b>National Mathematics Program (NMP)*</b>	Program for improving numeracy and mathematics learning	No details yet	No details yet	All grade levels
<b>National Science and Technology Program (NSciTP)*</b>	Program for development of scientific and technological literacy	No details yet	No details yet	Grades 4–10

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes that DepEd has not yet released policies on these programs. Data presented in the figure represents the components of the National Learning Recovery Program as of December 31, 2023.

Source: Adapted from DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2023, and DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023



Additionally, families with limited resources often refrain from allowing their children to participate in learning camps due to associated expenses, such as transportation and food.

In response, EDCOM II recommends alternative support measures, such as providing transportation allowances and meals, to incentivize learner participation. Alternatively, embedding learning camps into regular school days could make participation mandatory, addressing the challenge of voluntary attendance.

**Another key challenge for the learning camps was the lack of a baseline and endline assessment that could have been used for grouping learners, designing targeted instruction, and monitoring learners' progress.** Initially, DepEd sought to implement the NLCA, encompassing pretests and posttests for camp participants. However, as of writing, the pretest results have not been released. Consequently, teachers have relied solely on learners' grades and outcomes from other local assessments to group students. The release of posttest results is also pending, making it challenging to determine whether learners demonstrated improvement or are grade ready for the upcoming school year.

As highlighted in Table 4, the remaining components of the NLRP do not have existing policies that detail their implementation. Previous consultations have prompted requests to DepEd for additional information regarding the National Reading Program and other scheduled programs within the NLRP. This includes details on (a) program design, (b) budgetary allocation for 2024, (c) the number of targeted learners, (d) incentives envisioned for students, if any, and (e) teacher training and learning resources, specifying corresponding budgetary allocations for both under the 2024 budget.

To date, ongoing orientations have been reported regarding the National Reading Program. Additionally, DepEd Memorandum No. 064, s. 2023, has been issued, outlining the procedures for the selection of learning resources eligible for procurement under the NRP.

Moreover, **EDCOM II's preliminary analysis of PISA 2022 data reveals that learners in the Philippines who attained the minimum proficiency level in Math, Reading, and Science: (a) express aspirations for higher educational attainment, such as master's or doctorate degree; and (b) frequently originate from classes characterized by positive disciplinary climates, where teachers can promptly**

**commence classes without prolonged disruptions.** This underscores the importance for DepEd to investigate factors that can better prepare and motivate learners to pursue advanced studies beyond secondary education while also supporting teachers in fostering positive learning environments.

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## Recommendations

Ahead of the launch of the NLRP, EDCOM II has conducted a consultation (EDCOM II, 2023, May 18) with groups that conducted learning loss recovery initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. While these groups used different approaches and formats for their programs, the following were identified as key elements for successful implementation, namely:

- Regular and timely assessments that yield granular data on learner progress;
- Grouping learners according to their level of proficiency rather than their grade level;
- Prioritizing foundational skills in reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as socioemotional learning; and
- Mobilizing parents and the community to provide the interventions as support to teachers

EDCOM recommends that these findings be considered by DepEd in their implementation of the NLRP.

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**Issue: The key challenge in implementing Mother Tongue–Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) lies in the centralized structure of education governance within DepEd, which struggles to accommodate the linguistic diversity of the country.**

### **EDCOM II Findings**

While choosing the official language of instruction has always been a contentious issue in basic education, there is a wide consensus that using the learner's first language is optimal for learning (DeStefano et al., 2023; Metila & Williams, 2016; Monje et al., 2019). Thus, the introduction of Mother Tongue–Based Multilingual

*Additionally, families with limited resources often refrain from allowing their children to participate in learning camps due to associated expenses, such as transportation and food.*



Education (MTB-MLE) became one of the main pillars of the K to 12 curriculum, introduced through RA 10533. The first EDCOM (1991) has similarly recommended the use of the vernacular language in instruction, specifically that “the home language shall be used as the language of learning from Grade 1 up to Grade 3, with Filipino gradually becoming the medium from Grade 4 through high school.”

**The challenge of implementing the MTB–MLE lies in the highly centralized structure of education governance in DepEd, which cannot deliver a program that was intended to accommodate the country’s linguistic diversity.** The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino has identified at least 130 indigenous languages in the Philippines, while the 2020 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the PSA shows that there are at least 245 languages spoken in the households covered by the survey. In addition, from 2013 to 2018 alone, as much as 15% of Filipinos migrated internally to other municipalities, cities, or provinces (PSA & UPPI, 2019), which means that a number of learners are living in areas where the lingua franca is not necessarily their first language.

Given these challenges, effectively implementing the MTB–MLE will require field offices and schools to be actively involved in developing materials, assessment tools, and even training programs for teachers. This has been difficult to implement in DepEd, where policymaking and the delivery of key education programs such as the procurement of learning resources and the development of national assessments remain at the central office level in spite of the guidelines for materials development at the RO, SDO, and school levels issued in DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, Annex 4. This challenge is evidenced by the prevailing DepEd policy on MTB–MLE, which covers only 19 languages (DepEd Order No. 19, s. 2019); meanwhile, schools and teachers on the ground struggle to curate and develop their learning resources that meet the needs of their students.

To contextualize the challenges further, it is important to highlight that in the K to 12 curriculum, DepEd has operationalized the MTB–MLE by introducing the mother tongue both as the medium of instruction and as a separate subject area. Specifically, the mother tongue subject area shall be a required subject for Grades 1 to 3. Moreover, the mother tongue shall be used in teaching and learning for all subjects from Kindergarten through Grade 3, except in English and Filipino. Teachers may also use the mother tongue to help bridge learners in Grades 4 to 6 to learn English, which is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 until Grade 12.

A series of studies conducted by the ACTRC found that schools encountered various challenges in implementing the MTB-MLE (Williams et al., 2014; Metila et al., 2016). In terms of language, schools must deal with discrepancies between the official medium of instruction of their school and the learners' mother tongue. Schools also find it difficult to procure localized resources and materials that use the mother tongue; often, this results in teachers, who do not receive adequate support, needing to translate educational materials into the students' mother tongue. Some schools have struggled to solicit support from stakeholders, especially parents. As a result, teachers find it difficult to foster literacy skills, enhance the vocabulary in the students' mother tongue, and accommodate students who do not speak the mother tongue of most students in their school. Nevertheless, Pradilla et al. (2017) noted that the availability of effective teacher training and improved pupil–book ratios could mediate the effects of mismatch in the mother tongue and the medium of instruction, and thus improve learning outcomes.

The findings from EDCOM II consultations echo those that were identified in the study by the ACTRC. In Luzon, teachers highlight that teaching mother tongue as a separate subject leads to redundancy, repeating topics already covered in Filipino. Meanwhile, in other regions, teachers express concerns about inadequate learning resources and insufficient teacher training. In some areas, teachers themselves are unfamiliar with the orthography of the local mother tongue. Additionally, some teachers note that using the native language may not be effective in Science and Math, as English terms are prevalent in learning materials and everyday situations outside of school. Consequently, students might need to relearn concepts when they transition to Grade 4, where English becomes the primary language of instruction.

The recently introduced MATATAG curriculum attempted to introduce “a mother tongue–based compound coordinate bilingualism design” (DepEd, 2023a), emphasizing proficiency in Filipino and English. In Grade 1, the new curriculum integrates “Language and Literacy” and “Reading,” allowing the learners to choose their best-known language determined through language mapping data. While this is yet to be implemented, some teachers, during the curriculum validation activity of EDCOM II, expressed that this could be a positive development. It would provide teachers with the flexibility to prioritize basic reading and oracy skills before introducing Filipino and English.



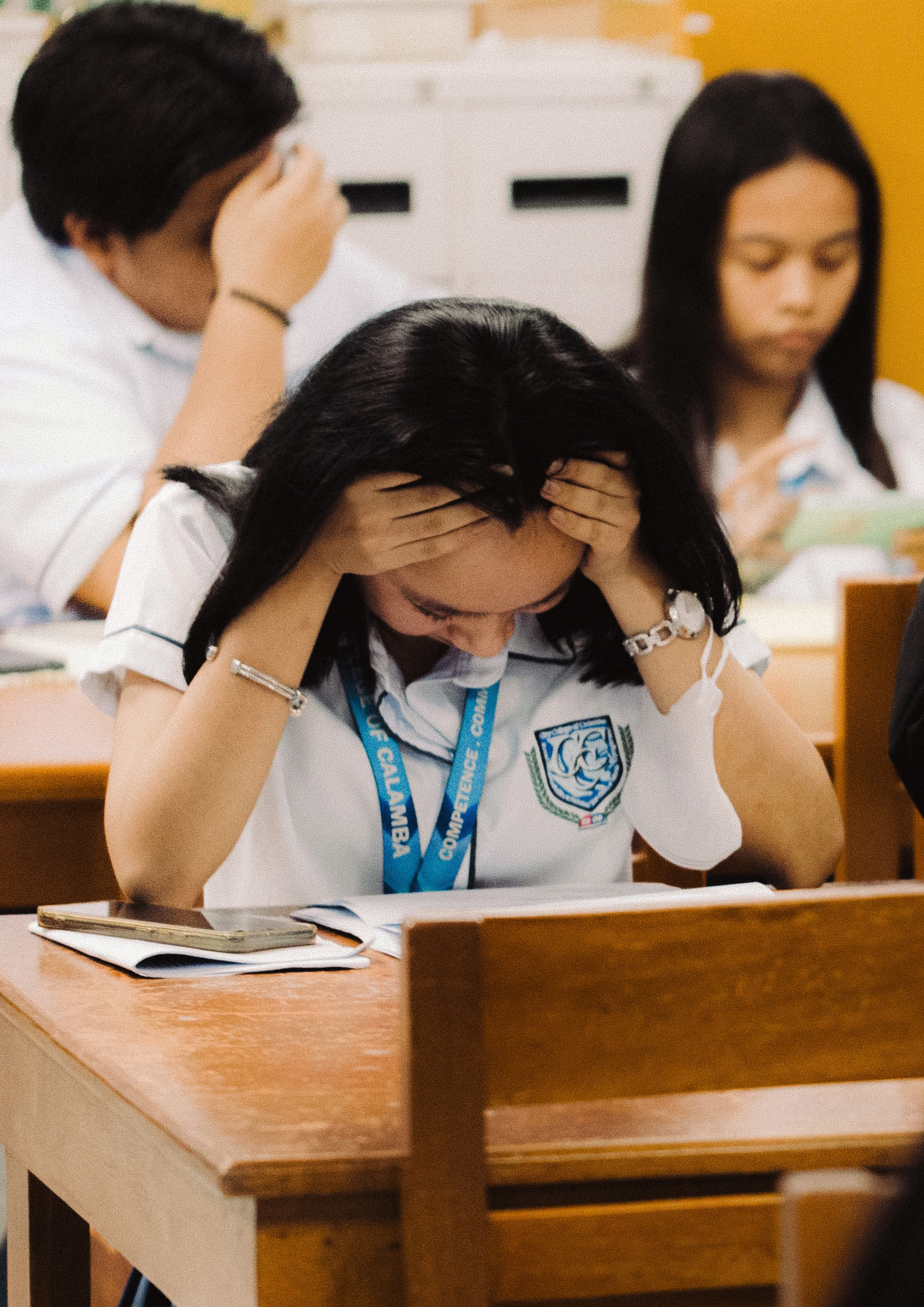
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## Next Steps for Year 2

**For year 2, the Commission shall focus on the 3 remaining priority areas, namely, school infrastructure, home and school learning environment, and alternative learning system (ALS).**

Among the initial activities identified are site visits to last-mile schools, as well as to high-performing and low-performing schools in the most recent rounds of the PISA. A site visit in Vietnam will also be conducted to benchmark best practices in curriculum and instruction, as well as in financing and improving school learning environments. Additional consultations with stakeholders will also be conducted, especially in relation to ALS, and home and school learning environment.

The Commission will also continue to monitor the ongoing implementation of the pilot MATATAG curriculum. Alongside partners like the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and the ACTRC, which DepEd has engaged in its monitoring and evaluation efforts for the pilot, consultations with participating schools will take place.



## HIGHER EDUCATION

# Inclusive Aspirations, Unequal Realities: Imperatives in Philippine Higher Education

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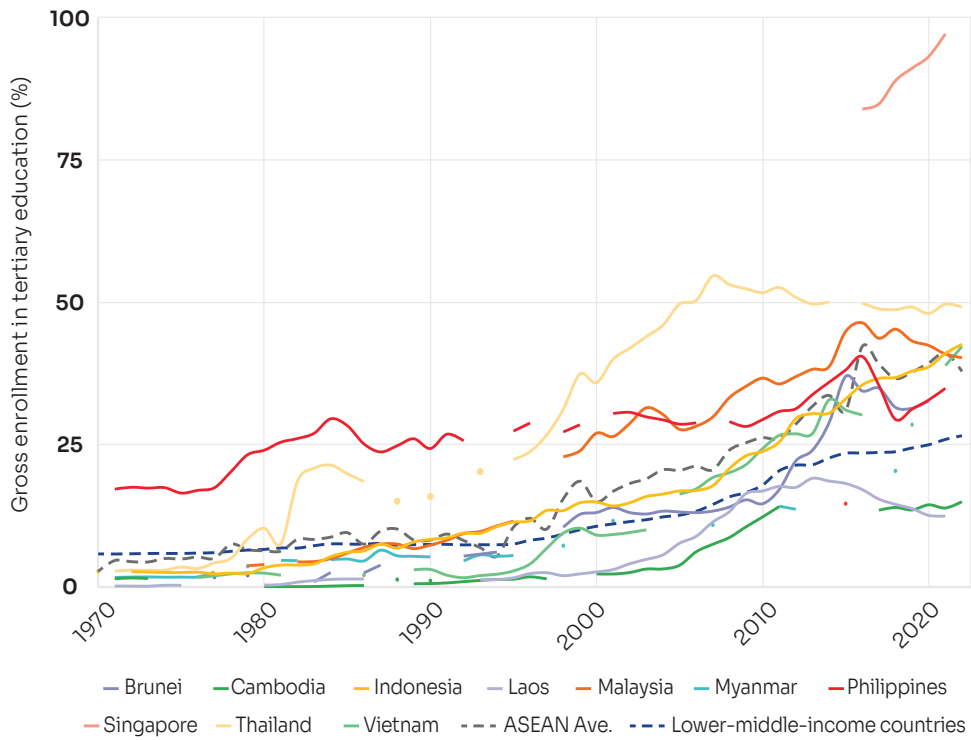
Since 1970, the Philippines historically placed above the ASEAN average in Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Tertiary Education<sup>1</sup> until 2016, and has yet to recover its leading position, as seen in Figure 1. In 2021, the country had a GER in tertiary education of 34.89%, lagging behind Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam (see Table 1). Furthermore, among the World Bank–defined group of lower-middle-income countries, Philippine GER in tertiary education has also been superior, albeit a narrowing gap.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank (2023) defines this indicator as the “number of people of any age group who are enrolled in tertiary education expressed as a percentage of the total population of the five-year age group following on from secondary school leaving.” This indicator includes participation in both higher education and technical-vocational education and training (ISCED Levels 5–8); thus, it may not accurately reflect the higher education sector only.



**FIGURE 1**  
**Historical Gross Enrollment Rates in Tertiary Education of ASEAN Member States (1970–2022)**



Note: Blanks indicate missing data points.

Source: World Bank (2023)

**TABLE 1**  
**Gross Enrollment Rates in Tertiary Education of ASEAN Member States (2018–2022)**











Country	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Brunei 	31.54	31.40	32.70		
Cambodia 	13.98	13.54	14.44	13.88	15.00
Indonesia 	36.80	37.93	38.65	41.00	42.63
Laos 	14.52	13.77	12.58	12.46	
Malaysia 	45.28	43.20	42.41	40.91	40.27
Myanmar 	20.39				
Philippines 	29.43	31.24	32.85	34.89	
Singapore 	88.89	91.09	93.13	97.10	
Thailand 	48.70	49.15	48.01	49.67	49.14
Vietnam 		28.51		38.87	42.22
<b>ASEAN Ave.</b>	36.61	37.76	39.35	41.10	37.85
<b>Lower-middle-income countries</b>	23.76	24.43	24.98	25.92	26.57

Note: Blanks indicate missing data points.

Source: World Bank (2023)

Despite the significant decline in student enrollment share of private higher education institutions in recent years, reaching approximately 50% in 2022, the substantial participation of the private sector remains a key distinguishing feature of the country's higher education system. Indeed, in 2021, the Philippine higher education system was in seventh place in terms of private enrollment numbers, composing 49.97% of the entire higher education sector enrollment (see Table 2).

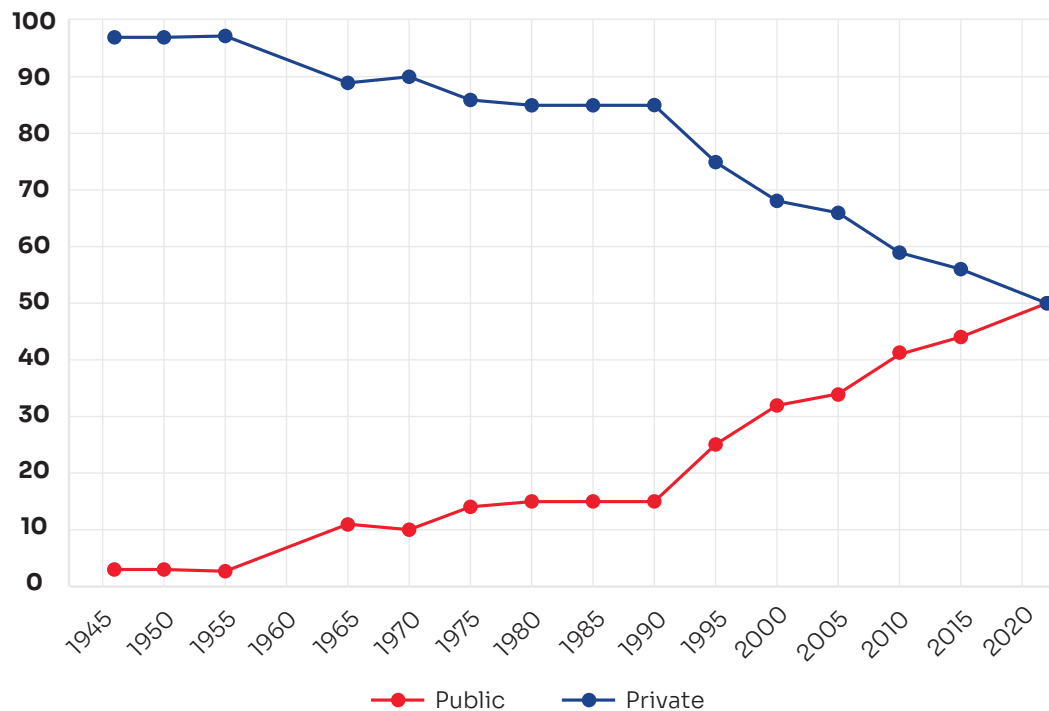
**TABLE 2**  
**Enrollment in Private HEIs (2021)**

Country	Private Enrollment Number	Private Enrollment Global Rank	Private Enrollments	Share of Private Enrollment Global Rank	Share of Private Enrollment (%)
India 	1	21,787,322	14	56.14	
China 	2	8,481,056	58	15.76	
Brazil 	3	6,954,254	7	74.68	
United States of America 	4	5,009,369	32	27.59	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 	5	2,993,903	1	100.00	
Republic of Korea 	6	2,332,423	6	80.20	
Philippines 	7	1,820,705	15	49.97	
Mexico 	8	1,751,940	23	35.16	
Colombia 	9	1,114,097	18	45.51	
Chile 	10	1,068,003	4	83.16	

*Note. Only 88 countries have complete data points on private enrollment numbers, total enrollment numbers, and private enrollment share in tertiary education.*

*Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2023)*

In AY 2022–2023, Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) numbered 2,396, of which 697 are public and 1,729 are private. However, despite the twofold majority provision by private institutions, enrollment level disparities between public and private HEIs are not significant, with about 2 million students enrolled in each type as of AY 2022–2023 (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2****Philippine Enrollment Share by Private vs. Public Providers**

Source: Yee (2022)

Notably, despite the seemingly small number of public HEIs, satellite campuses of state universities and colleges (SUCs) in fact enrolled the largest proportion of students at 952,117 (22.86% of the entire higher education enrollments, including in private HEIs), followed by 786,315 students (18.88%) enrolled in their main campus counterparts. Meanwhile, 354,917 students (8.52%) were enrolled in local universities and colleges (LUCs) and 1,811 (0.04%) in other government schools (CHED, 2023, Sep).<sup>2</sup>

It must be noted, nonetheless, that in recent years, along with the increase in enrollments in higher education, attrition rates have also risen. The attrition rate during the AY 2019–2020 pre-pandemic was 20.21%, but more than doubled to 40.98% by AY 2022–2023 (CHED, 2023, Sep). The sharp increase can be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic; nevertheless, post-pandemic attrition rates must be monitored to determine whether the country has recovered to pre-pandemic levels in participation and access to higher education.

<sup>2</sup> While a higher education issue, the private education crisis resulting from this rapid decline in the enrollment share of private HEIs and the need to operationalize the constitutionally enshrined complementarity principle between public and private HEIs is an issue covered by the EDCOM II Finance and Governance Standing Committee.

**However, despite increased participation and enrollment levels over time, equitable access remains elusive.** Daway-Ducanes et al. (2018) revealed that students from richer families had an “income advantage” in admission to the University of the Philippines system. They found that applicants from the lowest (poorest) decile have a 10.6% lower probability of admission than applicants from the top three deciles. On top of inequitable probabilities in the admissions processes, Tan & Siriban (2017) identified that, at a national level, college attainment and college completion rate correlate significantly with family income, highlighting the gravity of the issue.

Looking closely at inequitable access through college enrollments, Bayudan-Dacuycuy et al. (2023) argued that it remained relatively minimal compared to the richer population. In 1999, only 1.7% of college enrollments belonged to the lowest (poorest) decile, which rose to 6.1% in 2019. Despite the narrowing income inequality among the students, enrollments from the richest decile remained double that of the poorest decile, at 12.2% in 2019. Moreover, in private HEIs, income distribution remained more pronounced in favor of the richer students than in public HEIs.

**The quality of programs and institutions remains a significant concern in the Philippine higher education sector.** Not only is equitable access to higher education a major challenge in today’s higher education sector, but access to *quality* education makes the issue more complex. The lack of an integrated database of quality indicators and indices at the HEI level exacerbates the complexity, making it difficult to determine the number and geographic distribution of quality HEI providers and programs. Adding to CHED’s HEI database variables, such as the HEI type and mandate, average passing rates of students in professional board examinations—in addition to, and even more significant than the number of those who land in the top 10 or 20 of the examinations, the percentage of CHED-monitored programs complying with the minimum requirements of its Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs), having an institutionalized Internal Quality Assurance System and a system of external review whether by accreditation, program or institutional assessment or alternative external review mechanisms, other performance indicators in teaching, research, and public service would eventually help develop a more reliable index of quality to nuance local and international perceptions of uneven quality.



In the absence of such a database, several variables have been used as indicators of quality: (a) passing rates in professional board examinations, a publicly acknowledged gauge of quality—with the passing rates hovering between 36% and 40% of all takers and 51% and 60% of first-time takers between 2009 and 2019; (b) faculty qualifications that are low compared to the usual international norm for higher education, albeit with a gradual increase in the proportion of faculty with graduate degrees in the 2009–2018 decade from 45% in 2009 to 54% in 2018 and from 10% to 17% increase in the proportion of faculty with doctoral degrees; and (c) quality assurance indicators such as accreditation, Centers of Excellence or Centers of Development for programs, and the grant of autonomous and deregulated status to HEIs (Bautista et al., 2023).

The Philippine system of quality assuring higher education qualifications is complex. In addition to CHED-defined quality standards, HEIs can also monitor and evaluate their quality through voluntary accreditation from private organizations. Private organizations provide program- and institutional-level assessments to HEIs (see Table 3 for quality assurance bodies).

**TABLE 3****Quality Assurance Bodies for Philippine Education Institutions**

Educational Level	Quality Assurance Bodies			
	Government Agency Setting Minimum Standard	Voluntary Assessment of Quality Beyond Compliance with Minimum Standards		
		Quality Assurance by Government Agencies	Peer Review-Based Accreditation by Private Local Organizations	Peer Review-Based Accreditation by Private International Organizations
Basic Education	DepEd		PAASCU, PACUCOA, ACSCU-AAI	
TVET	TESDA	STAR (program level) aligned with EASVET QAF		APACC (institutional level)
Higher Education	CHED	Programmatic (COD and COE)  Institutional level (ISA, autonomous status)	Programmatic (PAASCU, PACUCOA, ACSCU-AAI, AACUP, ALCUCOA)  Institutional (PAASCU, PACUCOA, ACSCU-AAI, AACUP)  Programmatic or institutional assessment (AUN)	Programmatic accreditation  <i>Examples:</i> <b>Engineering:</b> PTC-ACBET, ABET  <b>Business:</b> AACSB, IACBE  <b>Information and Communications Technology:</b> PCAB, ABET, Seoul Accord  <b>Hotel and Restaurant Management:</b> ACPHA, THE-ICE, ACF  <b>Architecture:</b> KAAB, NAAB, Canberra Accord
Regulated Professions	PRC (Licensing and CPD)			

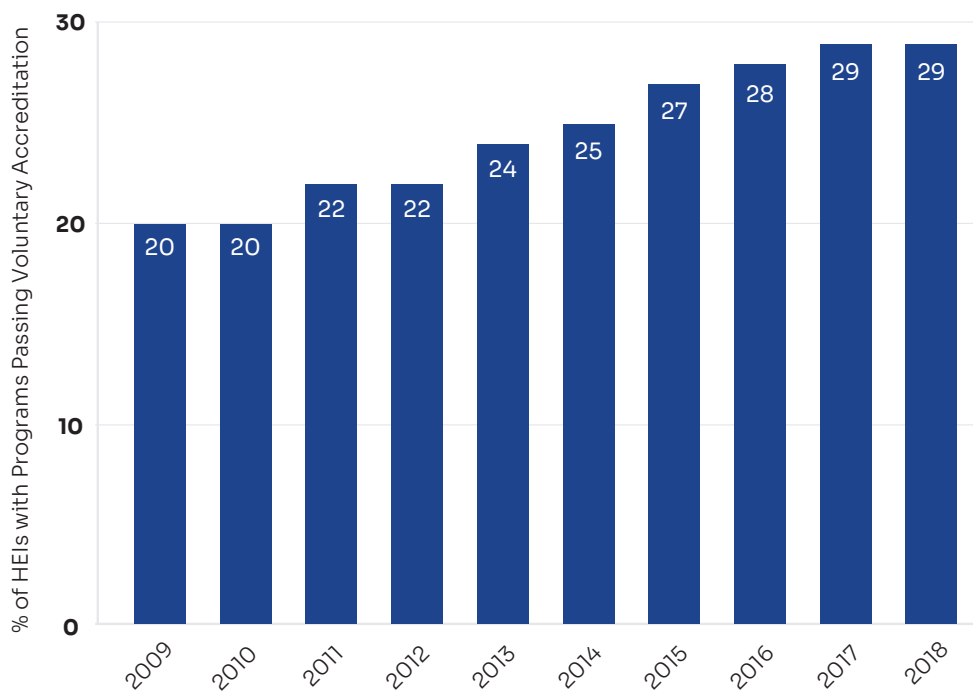
Note. Abbreviations: AACUP = Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines; ABET = Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology; AACSB = Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business; ACSCU-AAI = Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities-Accrediting Agency, Inc.; ACF = American Culinary Federation; ACPHA = Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration; ALCUCOA = Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation; APACC = Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission; AUN = ASEAN University Network; EASVET = East Asia Summit Technical and Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework; IACBE = International Accreditation Council for Business Education; KAAB = Korea Architectural Accrediting Board; NAAB = National Architectural Accrediting Board; PACUCOA = Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation; PAASCU = Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities; PCAB = Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board; PTC-ACBET = Philippines Technological Council-Accreditation and Certification Board for Engineering and Technology; CPD = Continuing Professional Development; TESDA = Technical Education and Skills Development Authority; THE-ICE = International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education; TVET = Technical-Vocational Education and Training

*However, on top of the low uptake of voluntary accreditation by HEIs, the proportion of institutions that have accredited programs remained at a low 29% in 2018 (Bautista et al, 2023).*

Notably, accreditation to improve the quality of higher education was recognized as early as EDCOM I. In fact, as part of its recommendations for higher education, the Commission underscored the need to “encourage and strengthen voluntary accreditation” (Congressional Commission on Education, 1991, p. 195). However, on top of the low uptake of voluntary accreditation by HEIs, the proportion of institutions that have accredited programs remained at a low 29% in 2018 (Bautista et al, 2023). As seen in Figure 3, it appears that, on average, there is a mere 1% annual growth rate in the percentage of HEIs passing voluntary accreditations from 2009 to 2018.

Despite being a means to uphold quality, Conchada & Tiongco (2015) identify that institutions are hesitant to undergo accreditation due to reasons such as costs faced by HEIs, unavailability of specific programs that have program accreditation, differing enrollment share by program (where programs with greater shares are more incentivized to get accreditation), lack of wide-scale accreditation agencies that have good connections with profession- or program-based agencies, and accreditation’s overall voluntary nature. These factors may account for the low figure of accreditation uptake.



**FIGURE 3**

### Share of Philippine HEIs with Programs Passing Voluntary Accreditation

Source: CHED, as cited in Bautista et al. (2023)

At the program level, the awarding of Centers of Excellence (COEs) or Centers of Development (CODs) to HEIs is another indicator of quality, although it must be noted that there are many HEI programs of quality that are not covered by the existing policy on COEs and CODs. For example, the current program does not cover the fields of archaeology and demography. Against this backdrop, Bayudan-Dacuycuy et al. (2023) reported that efforts toward establishing COEs and CODs were limited, with only 182 HEIs designated as having COEs or CODs. Moreover, Bautista et al. (2022) reported that “57% of COEs are concentrated in only two SUCs—UP (University of the Philippines) (40 COEs) and Mindanao State University–Iligan Institute of Technology (8)—and five private higher education institutions or PHEIs—De La Salle University (DLSU-17); Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU-15); University of Santo Tomas (UST-12); Mapua University (MU-8); and Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP-8).”

Further, not only is there a concentration of such centers in select institutions, it can also be observed in several disciplines (refer to Figure 4). This includes engineering and teacher education, which are the disciplines that enroll the second- and third-most number of students, respectively. In contrast, such centers are limited in disciplines like criminal justice education (which follows teacher education in the largest number of enrollments by discipline) and library and information science (CHED, 2023, Sep).

**FIGURE 4**



**Development (CODs) by Discipline**

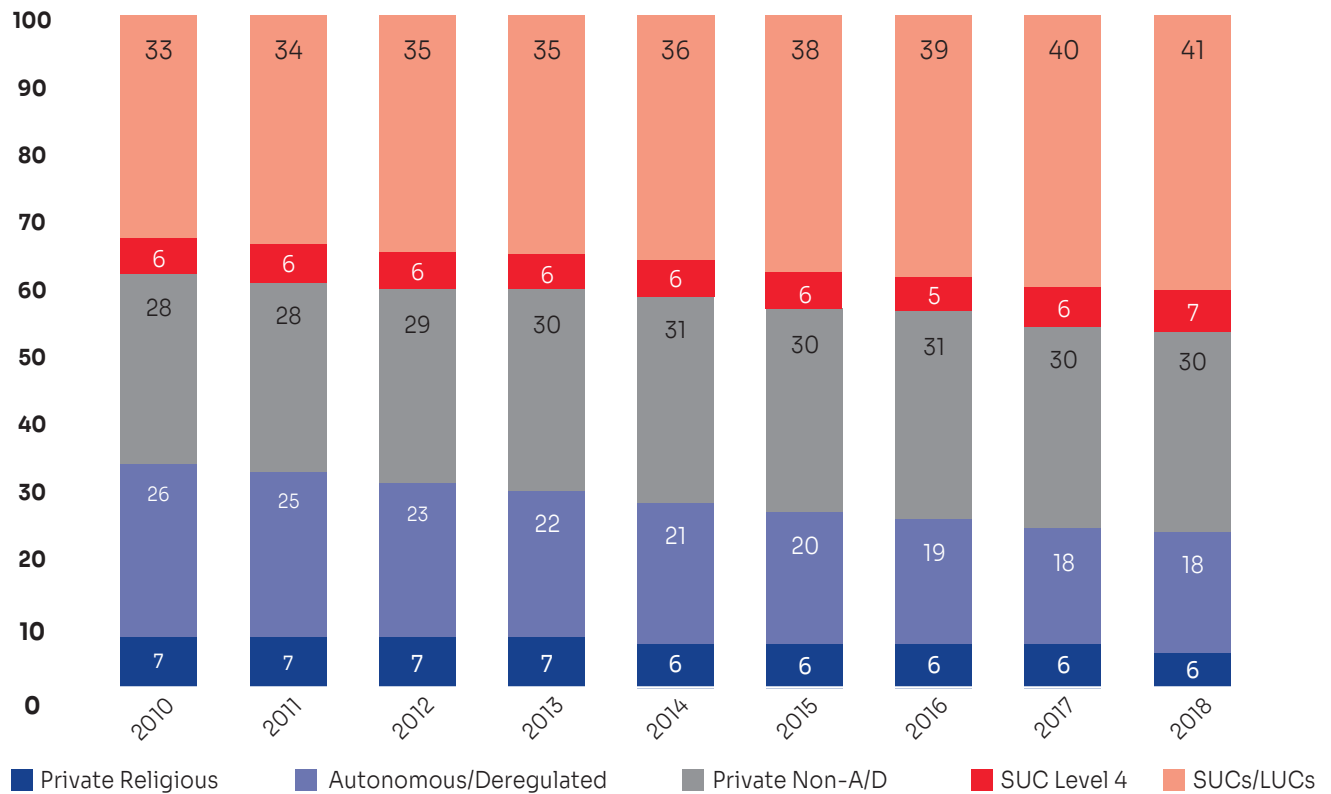
## and Institutional Type

*Source: CHED (2023, Jun)*

According to Republic Act (RA) No. 7722 of 1994, Section 8, part of CHED's powers and functions is to "identify, support and develop potential centers of excellence in program areas needed for the development of world-class scholarship, nation building and national development." This was consistent with the recommendations of EDCOM I, which stated that "centers of excellence shall be established in the regions in the various fields of tertiary and graduate education such as teacher education, science and technology education, professional education, and engineering education, among others" (Congressional Commission on Education, 1991, p. 84). Further, in the past years, EDCOM II analysis of CHED data shows that budgetary support for COEs and CODs (as of April 30, 2023) has diminished steadily since 2018, with the number of HEIs supported dropping from 9 (Php 18.64 million) per year to just 2 in 2022 (Php 10 million).

The current CHED vertical typology (as per CHED Memorandum Order [CMO] no. 46, s. 2012) of private HEIs classifies them as autonomous, deregulated, or regulated based on program and institutional quality criteria that are currently under review. While regulated HEIs may be of quality based on other indicators that have yet to be incorporated into a quality index, using autonomous and deregulated status as quality indicators in Figure 5 shows that enrollment in autonomous and deregulated private HEIs declined by 8%, while regulated HEIs increased from 28% to 30% (Yee, in press). With a similar caveat that the current criteria for SUC Level IV may have disadvantaged otherwise quality SUCs or similarly situated LUCs, assuming provisionally that only SUC Level IV is equivalent to autonomous or deregulated status in private HEIs, Figure 5 discloses that while student enrollments in SUCs and LUCs increased by 8% from 2010 to 2018, enrollments in Level IV SUCs have remained stable at around 6% to 7%. **Mindful that some quality HEIs may not be classified as**

**such given the limitations of existing criteria,** this trend may nevertheless suggest that access to institutions recognized for quality—such as Level IV SUCs and autonomous and deregulated private HEIs—has significantly



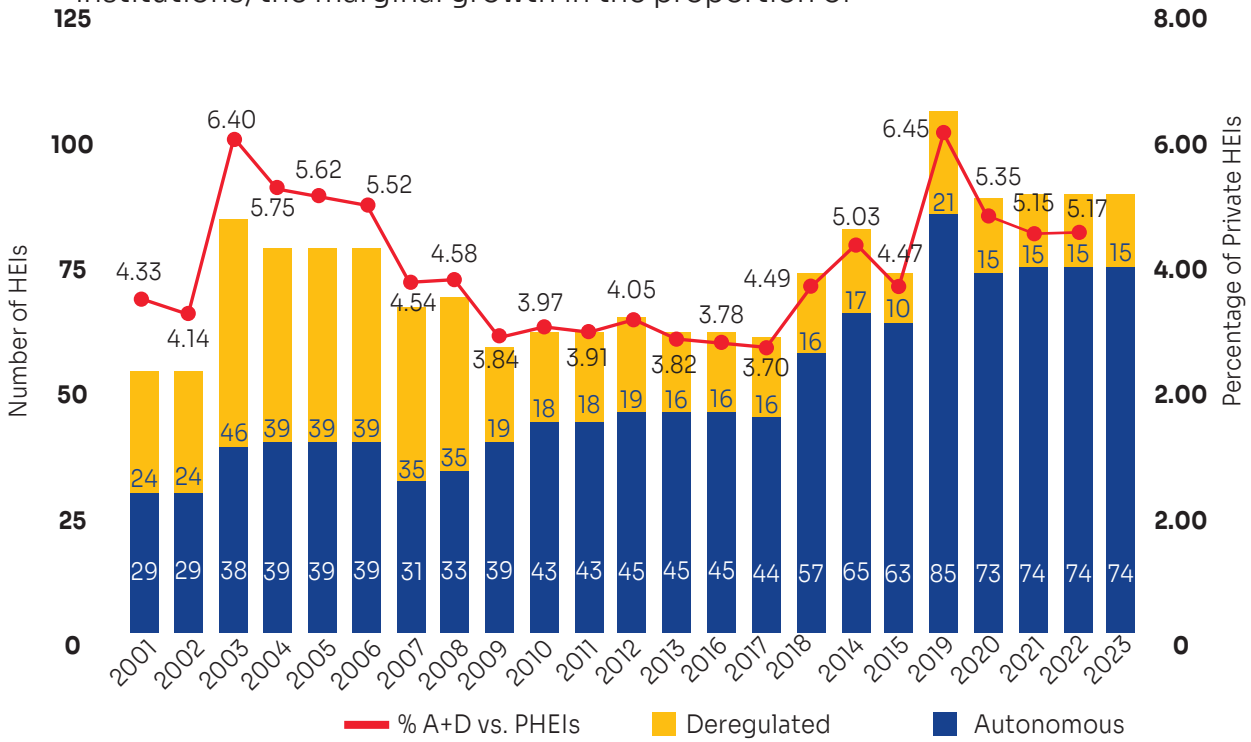
declined since 2010.

## FIGURE 5 Distribution of Enrollments per Type of Higher Education Institution in the Philippines

Source: Yee (in press)

**Assuming autonomous, deregulated, or Level IV HEIs as unequivocal indicators of quality, the increase in the number of institutions that are deemed of unequivocal quality has also been minimal.** Taking the private sector as a case in point, Figure 6 shows the number of autonomous and

deregulated institutions increasing from 53 in 2001 to 89 in 2022. Since the relative number of regulated Institutions increased along with the quality institutions, the marginal growth in the proportion of



quality institutions was slightly over 1%, from 4.33% to 5.17%.

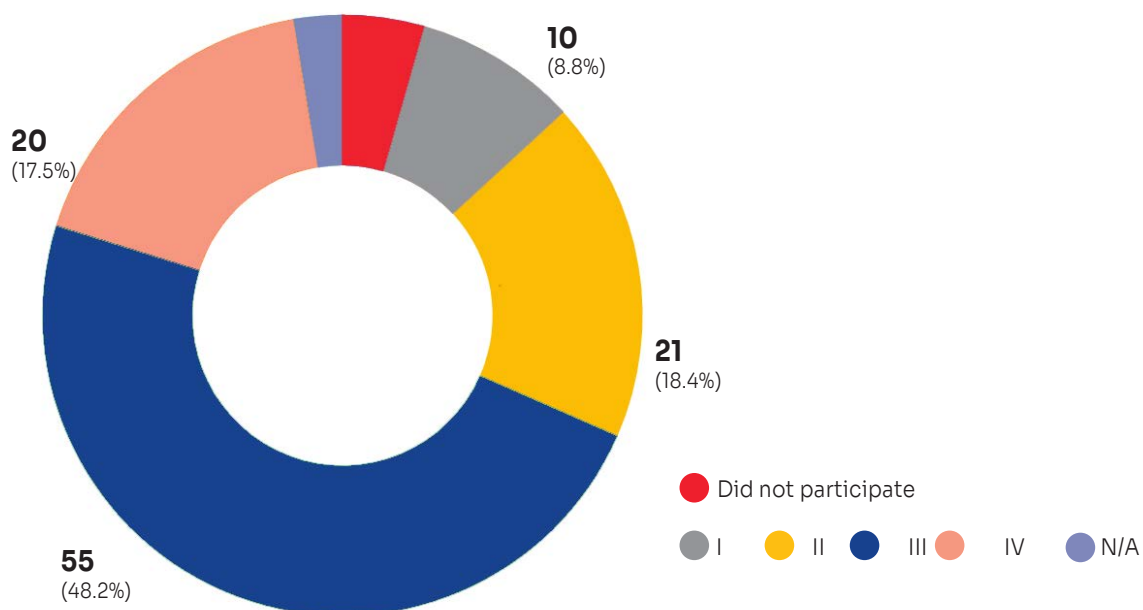
**FIGURE 6**  
**Number of Autonomous and Deregulated Private Higher Education Institutions**

Source: CHED (received 2023, Jun 21)

**In the public sector, the lack of regular evaluations for SUC leveling and the absence of a similar leveling for LUCs make it impossible to conduct time-based comparisons of educational quality.** However, insights may be gleaned from CMO no. 12, s. 2018. This memorandum indicates that among the SUCs, the largest concentration is at Level III, accounting for 48.2%. According to the Department of Budget and Management–CHED Joint Circular No. 1, s. 2016, Level III SUCs “are very good in undertaking the functions of a state university/ college but fall short of the qualities of a Level IV SUC. This level includes SUCs that meet at least the minimum percentage points in each key result

area (KRA).<sup>3</sup> This is followed by Level II (18.4%), Level IV (17.5%), and Level I (8.8%), as illustrated in Figure 7. Mindful of limitations in the current leveling system, it is structured so that a higher level corresponds to higher quality. Following this assumed hierarchy of quality, the distribution of SUCs across these levels, as detailed in the memorandum, suggests that over half of these institutions do not meet the minimum requirements in all KRAs, a benchmark

<sup>3</sup> The Department of Budget and Management–Commission on Higher Education (DBM–CHED) Joint Circular No. 1, s. 2016, operationalizes 4 KRAs: (a) quality and relevance of instruction, (b) research capability and output, (c) services to the community; and (d) management of resources.



set for Level IV. This distribution underscores a significant proportion of state universities falling short of the highest designated quality level. There are no SUCs classified as Level V, which are described as “comparable to the best universities or colleges in Asia.”

## FIGURE 7

### Distribution of State Universities Across Levels

*Note: Institutions under “N/A (not applicable)” are state universities that were yet to be established or were still local universities during the fiscal year (FY) 2016 SUC Leveling Evaluation. Five state universities did not participate in the leveling evaluation.*

Source: CHED (2023, Jun)

The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Referencing Report of the



Philippines (2019) describes the Philippine HEIs as highly uneven. Bautista et al. (2023) attribute this to education politics: populist policies proliferated private and public HEIs without much regard for quality to meet increasing demographic demands. In the private sector, the authors identify the lack of market for accreditation due to underdeveloped student loan programs, which is the driving factor for demand by HEIs in the case of the United States. In the public sector, national and local politics prevent CHED from influencing HEIs' uptake of mandatory and voluntary quality assessments and evaluations. Funding limitations for incentivizing the HEIs' voluntary assessments and evaluations also remain a challenge for CHED.

EDCOM II will further unpack the usual indicators and perception of uneven quality and support CHED's effort at building the needed database to qualify this perception and identify areas of intervention.

**Although globally, ranking in league tables is used as an indicator of quality, the exclusion of Philippine HEIs in World and Asia university rankings does not necessarily mean they are not of quality given the bias of the rankings criteria for research universities.** For instance, it must be noted that only a

handful of HEIs have participated in international rankings. As seen in Table 4, unlike Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, the Philippines has only 4 ranked institutions in the 2024 Times Higher Education World University Rankings and 5 in the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings 2024 (Abad, 2023; Ku, 2023)—although 16 institutions were ranked in the QS Asia Rankings in 2024 (Abello, 2023).

**TABLE 4**  
**Number of HEIs in Ranking Brackets of World University Rankings**

Ranking Bracket	Philippines	Vietnam	Malaysia	Thailand
<b>Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024</b>				
251-300			1	
301-350			1	
351-400				
401-500			4	
501-600			1	
601-800		2	4	2
801-1000				2
1001-1200	1		3	1
1201-1500	1	1	5	6
1501+	2	3	4	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>QS World University Rankings</b>				
51-100			1	
101-150			1	
151-200			3	
201-250				1
251-300			2	
301-350			1	
351-400				1
401-500	1			
501-600	1	1	4	2
601-800	1	1	5	1



801-1000	1	2	2	3
1001-1200			7	
1201-1400	1	1	2	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>

Source: Times Higher Education World University Rankings (2023); QS World University Rankings (2023)

Notably, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028 utilizes the “number of HEIs in reputable international rankings” as a measure of the “global competitiveness of Philippine HEIs,” which is under the outcome of “Globally Competitive and Inclusive Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education, and Improved Research Output Attained for a Broader Knowledge Economy.” For 2023, PDP sets a target of 22 HEIs to be included under reputational international rankings, an increase of only at least 1 more institution from the 2021 baseline of 21.

**TABLE 5**

**Target Matrix of Number of HEIs Under Reputable International Rankings**

Baseline (2021)	2023 target	2024 target	2025 target	2026 target	2027 target	2028 target
21	22	24	25	27	28	30

Note. Means of verification: Quacquarelli Symonds Asia rankings, Times, Higher Education, World University Rankings, Impact Ranking, or other ranking systems identified by CHED

Source: National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) (2022)

## Priority Area 11a: Access to Quality Education

Issue: The inequitable distribution and utilization of financial resources under the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (UAQTEA) resulted in unequal access to higher education, further compounded by regional disparities in enrollment

## levels and the financial sustainability of the Free Higher Education (FHE) program.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

To address the lack of access to quality higher education in the Philippines, EDCOM I put forward a recommendation to “improve the quality of tertiary education by establishing different ways of financing higher education” (The Congressional Commission on Education, 1991, p. 195–196). One such manifestation of improving tertiary education quality was the passage and implementation of the UAQTE Act (RA 10931, 2017). This Act aims to progressively widen access to quality tertiary education, focusing on Filipino students who are academically capable but financially disadvantaged. EDCOM II explored 2 elements of the Act: (a) the tertiary education subsidies and (b) the free higher education.

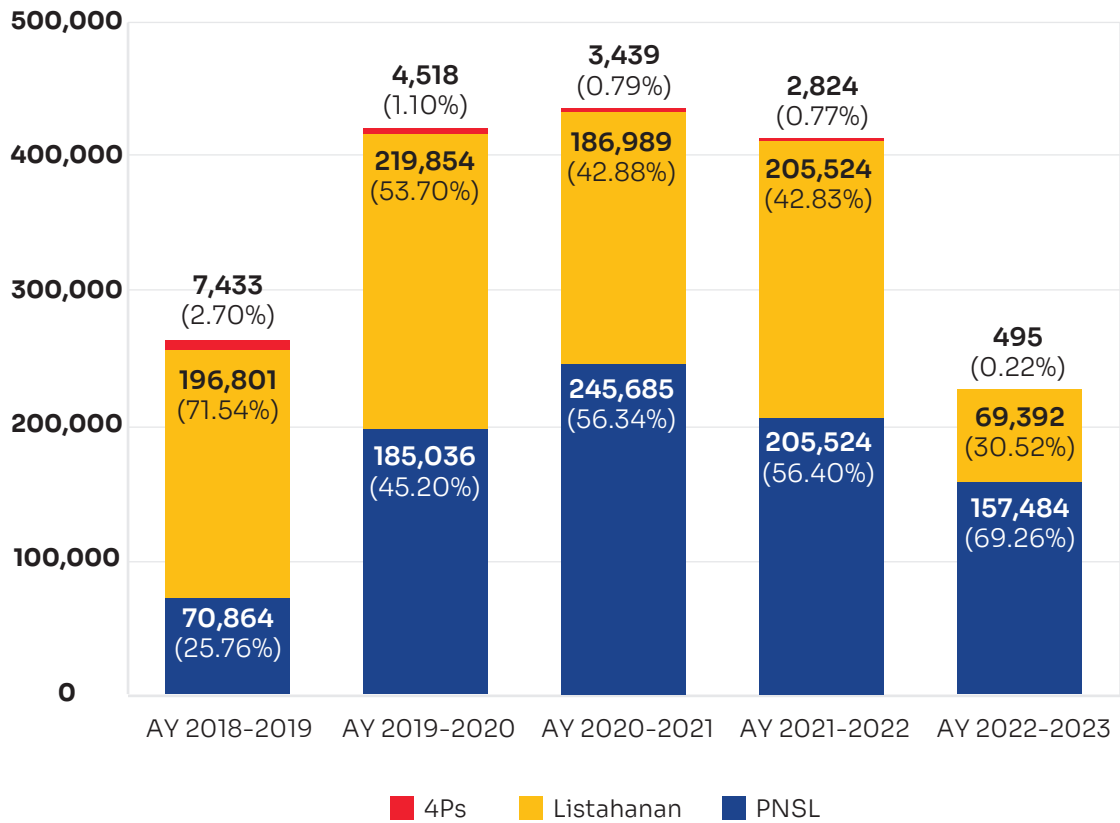
As per Section 7 of the Act, the provision of tertiary education subsidies (TES) is designed to assist these students in covering not only tuition and other school fees if they attend private HEIs but also allowances for books, supplies, transportation, and other necessary expenses to complete higher education programs and obtain qualifications.

The Act establishes a system of prioritization based on students’ household income levels to meet its progressive targets. Top priority is given to students from households identified by Listahanan 2.0, the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction created by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. This is followed by students not on Listahanan 2.0, ranked by per capita household income. However, the Act also states that this prioritization does not apply in cities and municipalities without SUCs or LUCs.

**A preliminary key finding is the discrepancy in the distribution of TES grantees relative to the eligibility criteria** set by the Act, as reported by the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST). Analysis of the data, as depicted in Figure 8, reveals a concerning trend: not only has the number of TES grantees identified as the poorest of the poor (those under Listahanan 2.0 and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program [4Ps]) diminished, but their proportion within the total distribution has also decreased. In 2018, 204,234 students in this category received TES, accounting for 74.24%. This number sharply declined to 69,887, making up only 30.74% of the total by 2022. Conversely, the number and proportion of grantees from private higher education institutions in



**FIGURE 8**  
**Tertiary Education Subsidies Distribution by Eligibility Criteria**



Source: Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (2023, Sep)

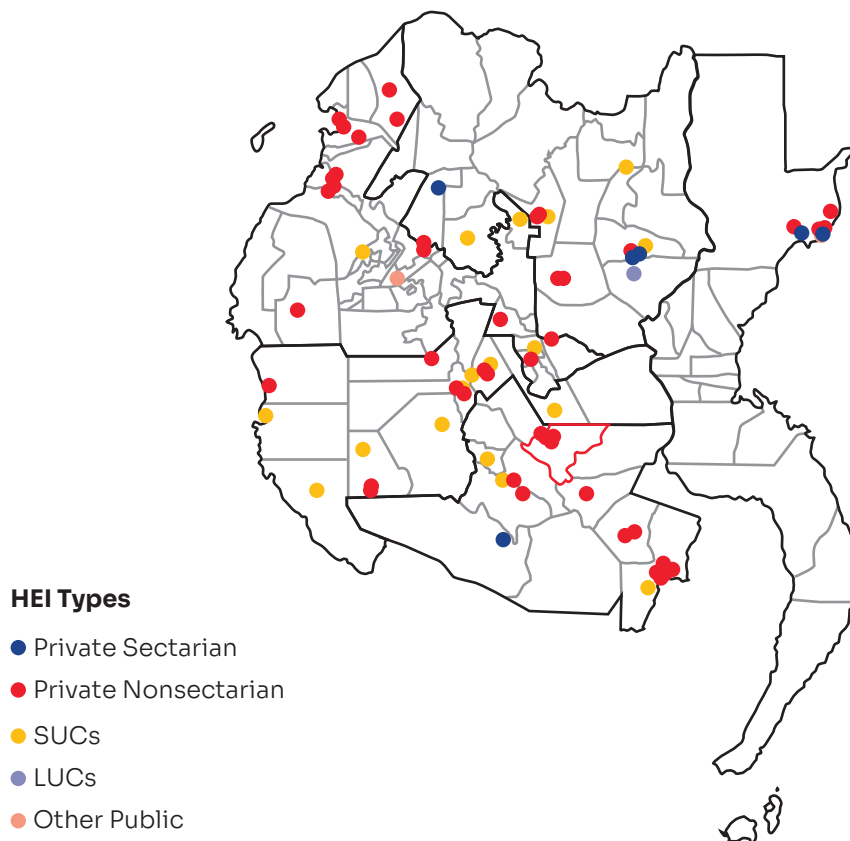
**Further examination also indicates that the definition of “PNSL” requires reevaluation to better align with the Act’s objectives and to foster equity.**

In some cases, cities and municipalities lacking SUCs and LUCs are adjacent to areas with these institutions, potentially making them accessible to students. For instance, a case study of Koronadal City, which lacks public HEIs, shows that students could feasibly access three SUC satellite campuses in nearby towns, as detailed in Table 6. This situation calls for reassessing the PNSL classification to uphold the Act’s equitable intent.

**TABLE 6****Case Study: Public Institutions in Proximate Distance to Koronadal City**

Public HEI Nearby	Distance (km)	Approximate Travel Time
Sultan Kudarat State University–Lutuyan	10.6	22 minutes
Sultan Kudarat State University–Sunas	24.3	27 minutes
Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology–Katipunan Campus	33.2	35 minutes

Note: These approximate only based on Google Maps directions from Koronadal City to the nearby HEI and will need to be validated using the actual availability of transportation options on the ground.

**FIGURE 9****Map of Koronadal City and Type of HEI Nearby Cities and Municipalities**

Note: Data adapted from Commission of Higher Education (2023, Jun).

Koronadal City, situated adjacent to the municipality of Lutuyan, is in close proximity to the Sultan Kudarat State University–Lutuyan satellite campus. This campus, the nearest public HEI to Koronadal City, is just 10.6 kilometers away, making it a potentially accessible option for poor students in the city. Another satellite campus of the Sultan Kudarat State University System, the Sunas campus, is 24.3 kilometers away. The travel time to this campus is only about 5 minutes longer than to the Lutuyan campus. However, given the actual accessibility of these institutions to the poor, the issue of physical equitable access requires further on-the-ground analysis. This situation underscores the need for a comprehensive review of the definition of accessibility for HEIs across different cities and municipalities, ensuring that public resources are utilized efficiently and equitably while mindful of the quality of the geographically accessible public HEIs.

In addition to the TES, EDCOM II analyzed the impact of the FHE program on the accessibility of higher education. The FHE, according to UniFAST, “is a program that exempts qualified students from paying tuition and thirteen (13) other school fees in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and CHED-recognized Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs).”

As per Section 4 of RA 10931, the program is financed using the projected number of enrollees for each academic year to serve as the “primary factor in computing the annual proposed budget of SUCs and, in the case of LUCs, the CHED for such purpose.” To analyze the funding implementation of the program, UniFAST implemented a 5-year moratorium wherein SUCs and LUCs are prevented from increasing tuition and other fees.

*In 2018, 204,234 students in this category received TES, accounting for 74.24%. This number sharply declined to 69,887, making up only 30.74% of the total by 2022.*

**EDCOM II analysis reveals that despite the tuition and other fees moratorium, the FHE program places upward pressure on its budgetary allocation requirements,**

which risks financial sustainability in the medium to long term. The number of CHED-approved LUCs granting FHE increased from 76 institutions in 2018 to 97 in 2022, as the program incentivized LUCs to vie for CHED recognition to qualify for the program. Consequently, accompanying the increase in the number of CHED-approved LUCs from 2018 to 2022 are the budget allocated to the program and the number of FHE student beneficiaries, which increased by 253% and 217%, respectively. The change in budget and number of beneficiaries has been constantly positive since implementation, as reflected in the positive—albeit diminishing—year-over-year (YoY) levels depicted in Table 7.

The increase in the SUCs counterpart was not as prominent. As seen in the same table, 2022 levels reflect a 42.48% and 56.73% increase in budget and number of beneficiaries relative to 2018 levels. However, the budget allocated in 2022 showed a YoY 1.4% decrease, implying that the allocated budget shrank relative to the previous year; but nevertheless, it is still greater than the amount allocated in its initial year of implementation.

**TABLE 7****Budget Allocation for the FHE Program in LUCs and SUCs**

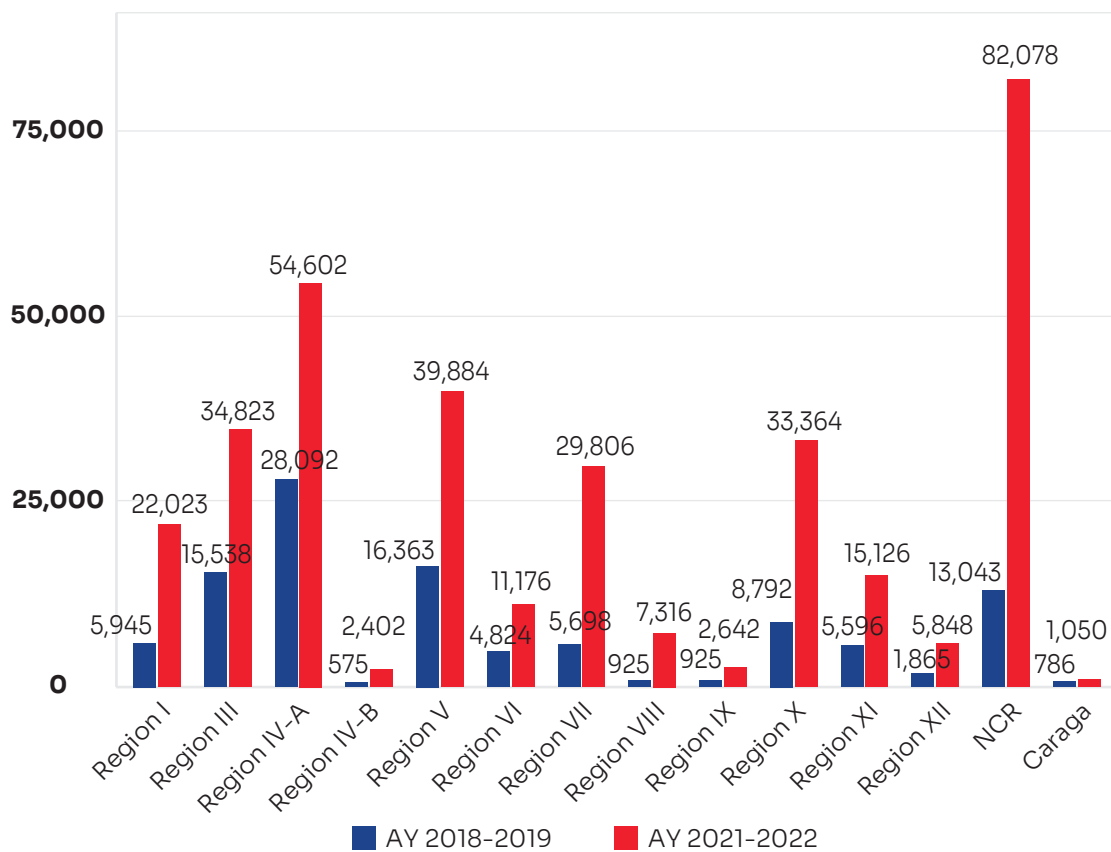
Academic Year	Budget (Php Million)	No. of Participating HEIs	No. of Beneficiaries	% YoY Change in Budget	% YoY Change in No. of Beneficiaries	% Budget Change from 2018	% Change in No. of Beneficiaries from 2018
<b>LUCs</b>							
2018-2019	1,360	76	109,833				
2019-2020	2,388	103	179,887	75.56	63.78	75.56	63.78
2020-2021	3,444	106	253,302	44.22	40.81	153.19	130.62
2021-2022	4,681	108	342,484	35.92	35.21	244.14	211.82
2022-2023	4,805	97	349,252	2.64	1.98	253.21	217.98
<b>SUCs</b>							
2018-2019	13,153	113	1,080,473				
2019-2020	14,624	114	1,145,923	11.18	6.06	11.18	6.06
2020-2021	17,424	114	1,370,781	19.15	19.62	32.47	26.87
2021-2022	19,008	115	1,690,898	9.09	23.35	44.51	56.5
2022-2023	18,741	114	1,693,394	-1.4	0.15	42.48	56.73

Source: Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Administrative Report (2023), Philippine Association of State University and Colleges (PASUC) (2023)



Looking closely at the case of the LUCs, EDCOM II analysis reveals that there have been regional disparities in the expansion of LUC enrollment levels since 2018. Figure 10 illustrates that most regions experienced a surge in LUC enrollments, with the National Capital Region (NCR) experiencing the largest surge by almost 530%, from 13,043 enrollments in 2018 to 82,078 in 2021.

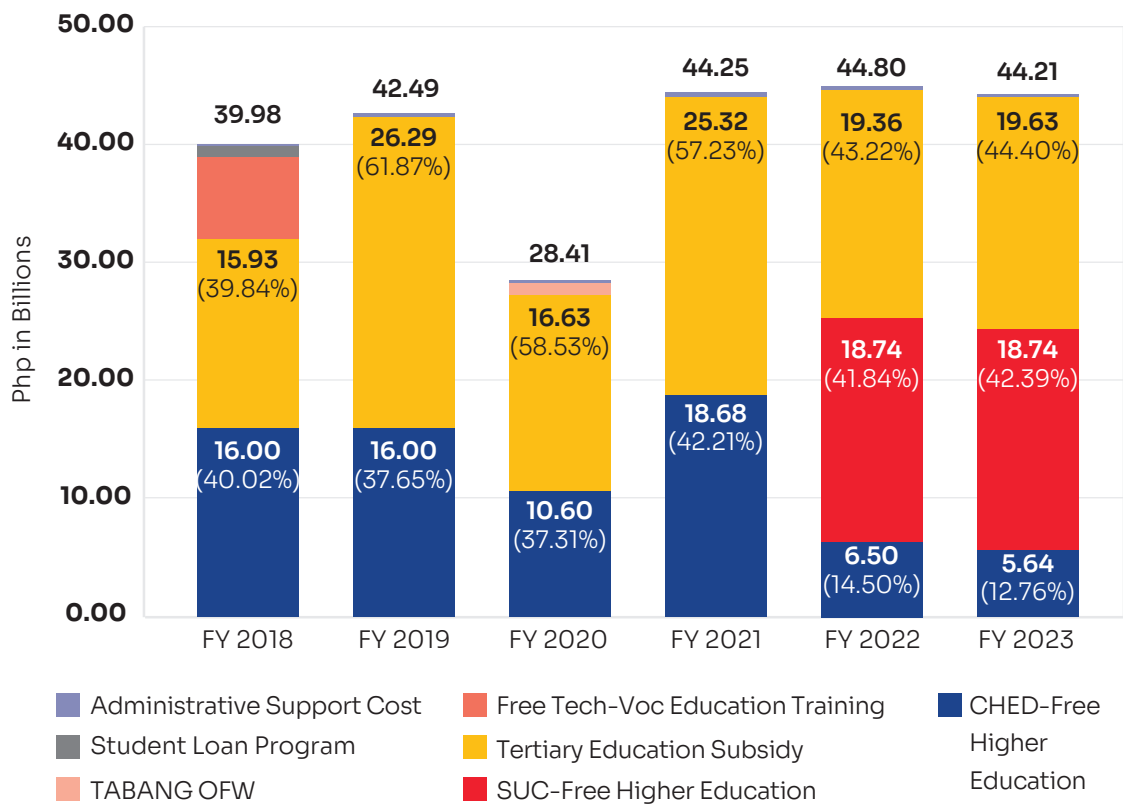
**FIGURE 10**  
**Distribution of LUC Enrollments by Region**  
**(AY 2018–2019 and AY 2021–2022)**



Source: Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (2023, Sep)

**The growing budgetary requirements of the FHE program in public HEIs expose the problem of financial sustainability without consideration of improving capacities for expanded enrollment.** As seen in Figure 11, the allocation of the UAQTEA budget to the FHE program relative to the TES program increased not only in number but also in proportion from FY 2018 to FY 2023 to support the surge of enrollments in public HEIs. In FY 2018, the 2 programs shared a similar allocation of around 40% of the total UAQTEA appropriation; but by FY 2023, the budget toward the FHE program became 55.15% (despite the FHE budget directly released to SUCs remaining the same in FY 2022 and 2023), exhibiting a 15.13% increase, whereas the TES program budget increased by only 4.56%.

**FIGURE 11**  
**Budget Allocation to Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931) Programs**



Note: From FY 2019, free tech-voc education training program funds are released to TESDA directly. From FY 2022, free higher education budget is released to SUCs directly, but CHED remains to receive allocations to fund the program to LUCs.

Source: CHED (2023, Aug), DBM (2022, 2023)

The figures imply that much of the UAQTEA budget is allocated toward a *nontargeting* program (i.e., FHE) instead of a *targeting* program (i.e., TES). Orbeta & Paqueo (2017) warned that untargeted programs would instead exacerbate unequal access to higher education. Students from poorer households tend to have lower qualifications, lowering their chances to win their admission slots against students who are better off, further widening the household income inequalities among students found in SUCs. **Therefore, the majority allocation of public finances toward the FHE program relative to the TES program may signal economic allocative inefficiencies and inequitable access to higher education.**

**The combination of misprioritized targeted subsidies and FHE programs subdues the equity intent of the Act.** Bautista et al. (2023) echo such woes: “The impact of this law on equity will largely depend on the success of targeting the poor with the TES and providing funds for living allowance and other expenses.” Nevertheless, further reviews of the student profiles of FHE beneficiaries must be conducted to pinpoint the effect of the FHE program on equitable access to higher education.

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## Recommendations

**EDCOM II has proposed a special provision in the General Appropriations Act, FY 2024, that aims to reemphasize the prioritization of students from Listahanan 3.0 and the 4Ps categories** (GAA FY 2024, Volume I-B, p. 484). This initiative is geared toward fostering more equitable access to tertiary education, making it imperative that UniFAST’s implementation of this reprioritization be closely supervised in the upcoming year. Reflecting on the main findings from year 1 under the priority area Access to Quality Higher Education, it becomes apparent that the allocation of TES grantees, as outlined in Section 7 of RA 10931, needs more stringent adherence and monitoring. On top of aligning the targeting mechanisms with the objectives of the Act, a reassessment of the definition of “access” is also recommended.

**In addition, imperative to the success of the Act is addressing the consequences of FHE.** Adequate and rationalized support must be provided to public HEIs while considering the pressing concerns of public financial sustainability. Moreover, in line with the recommendations of Ortiz et al. (2019), the public sector must strictly be monitored to ensure that it does not

exceed its respective carrying capacities, which may not only lead to upward budgetary pressures but also to the erosion of institutional quality. Lastly, the crowding out effect on private higher education providers must also be taken into account to foster complementarity in provision. However, cognizant of the uneven quality of HEIs, exploring alternative financing models, such as a voucher system and the Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs), to enhance student accessibility to quality education in private HEIs while simultaneously relieving the crowding out effect is also recommended. Such measures are crucial to bridge the gaps in accessibility and to uphold the spirit of equitable education provision as envisioned by the Act.

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## Priority Area 11b: Quality Assurance

Under this priority area, EDCOM II focused on 2 issues: (a) mapping the current Philippine quality assurance (QA) system in general, and higher education in particular, delineating the functions of government and voluntary QA bodies and study the creation of a separate QA agency, and (b) typology- and outcomes-based quality assurance and the grant of autonomous and deregulated status.

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**Issue: Mapping the current Philippine QA system in general and higher education involves delineating the functions of government and voluntary QA bodies and ensuring that the reconstitution of CHED's technical panels and committees aligns with contemporary challenges.**

### **EDCOM II Findings**

**Ensuring quality in higher education is a complex process that requires a blend of institutional mechanisms and strategies.** These are designed to maintain high standards and foster ongoing improvement, ensuring that educational programs align with the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. Key approaches in higher education QA encompass both internal and external systems. These systems comprehensively review academic programs, teaching

methods, and learning outcomes. They also include rigorous program and curriculum design, robust faculty development and evaluation processes, active solicitation of student feedback, encouragement of research and scholarship, and fostering partnerships with industry and other key stakeholders. Transparency and accountability in public reporting are also crucial.



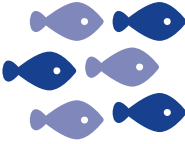







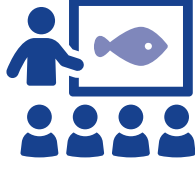



**For higher education agencies, institutional mechanisms involve setting and implementing periodically updated standards to align with labor market requirements and the evolving rhythms of modern life.** Delors (1998) supports this perspective, which emphasizes adapting to changing labor market demands and mastering the dynamics of individual existence. Policies, programs, and incentives to enhance teaching, learning, research, and disseminating and applying research findings are essential. A regulatory framework that promotes outcomes-based learning and innovation is also pivotal.

One significant observation by EDCOM II pertains to the standard-setting role of CHED's technical panels. According to Section 12 of the Higher Education Act (RA 7722, 1994), the technical panels shall "assist the Commission [on Higher Education] in setting standards and in program institution monitoring and evaluation."

**Reconstitution of the majority of technical panels has been underway since 2018.** In recent years, CHED has committed to reconstituting its technical panels and committees to assist in setting standards and monitoring and evaluating programs and institutions. Recognizing the importance of aligning academic programs with the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, climate change, and pandemics, among other sources of uncertainty, the Commission rightly pushed for the reform of the membership and the responsibilities of technical panels and committees, notably ensuring the inclusion of industry and government representatives in these bodies (CHED Administrative Order No. 3, s. 2019). This inclusion aims to ensure that curricular revisions and innovations—such as integrating technology, interdisciplinary approaches, skill-focused learning, global and cultural relevance, ethical education, collaborative and experiential learning, and assessment innovations—are relevant to the evolving 21st-century work and life landscape. Despite these intentions, CHED faces the challenge of completing the reconstitution of most of its technical panels, which is crucial for realizing the proposed curricular changes the Commission envisions (see Table 8 for details).



**TABLE 8**  
**Reconstituted Technical Panels**

FY 2020 (2)	FY 2021 (4)	FY 2022 (5)	FY 2023 (3)
			
Technical panel for Public Management Administration and Governance	Technical panel for Environmental Engineering	Technical panel for Fisheries	Technical panel for Teacher Education
			
Technical panel for Agriculture	Technical panel for Medicine	Technical panel for Nursing Education	Technical panel for Game Development and Gaming
			
	Technical panel for Pharmacy	Technical panel for Sociology	Technical panel for Maritime Education
			
Technical panel for Political Science		Technical panel for Economics	
			
		Technical panel for History	

Note: CHED approved the creation of the technical panel for Creative Industries to lead the creation of the Philippine Creative Industry Development Act (RA 11904, 2022).

Source: CHED (2023)

**In addition to the institutional quality assurance mechanisms facilitated by CHED, external accreditation bodies also play a key role in upholding quality.**

EDCOM II engaged in extensive consultations and roundtable discussions with executive boards and representatives from the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations, the Association of Local Universities and Colleges, and various peer-based accreditation bodies—the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities; the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation; the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges, and Universities–Accrediting Agency, Inc.; and the Accrediting Agency of the Chartered College and Universities in the Philippines and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation—under their two federations—the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines and the National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies Inc., respectively.

**The consultations with accreditation bodies have also emphasized the necessity for improved coordination and collaboration between CHED and these agencies.**

EDCOM I recommended to “organize a national coordinating council for accreditation” (Congressional Commission on Education, 1991, p. 195), and over a decade later, under Executive Order No. 705-A, s. 2008, the CHED Coordinating Council for Accreditation was created. However, as mentioned by the representatives from various accrediting bodies, the Council was not utilized. A key outcome has been the recognition of the need for clearer terms of engagement, delineating the responsibilities of each entity in ensuring program and institutional quality.





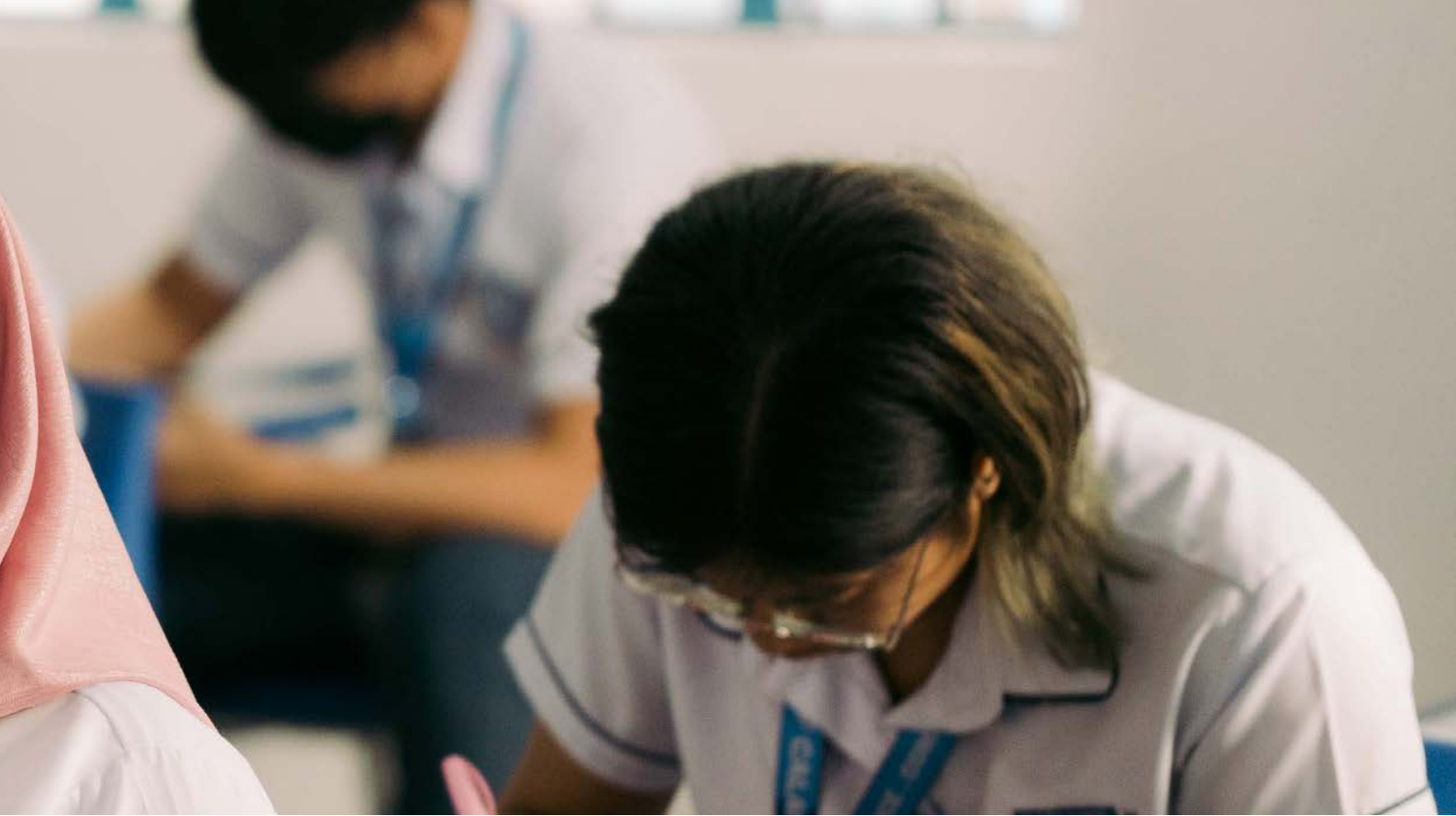
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## Recommendations

**EDCOM II strongly recommends that CHED prioritize the reconstitution of the remaining 83 technical panels** to uphold and maintain the quality of programs offered by HEIs. On top of this, their reconstitution must be monitored in year 2 so that skills taught to and gained by students meet the dynamic demands of the labor market.

**The Commission also recommends strengthening the relationship between CHED and accreditation agencies** with clearer terms of engagement to ensure complementarity between both parties and improve the quality assurance mechanisms in the higher education ecosystem.

**A notable result of the roundtable discussions with all the peer-based accreditation bodies is the collective decision to organize regular meetings and workshops among all the bodies.** These aim to discuss common concerns and revisions in criteria and approaches to accreditation in response to the need to enable learners to acquire 21st-century skills and competencies, initially with the support of EDCOM II. This collaborative effort is a significant step toward enhancing the quality assurance processes within the Philippine higher education system. EDCOM II therefore supports the cooperative initiative of the accreditation bodies in fostering a more collaborative environment toward quality assurance in the higher education sector.



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Issue: CHED's typology- and outcomes-based quality assurance system grapple with the persistent prevalence of a one-size-fits-all approach to granting autonomous and deregulated status to HEIs, impeding a clear emphasis on the unique roles of each type of HEI.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

EDCOM I recommended that “a clearer typology of tertiary institutions with corresponding levels of accountability should be established” (Congressional Commission on Education, 1991, p. 194–195). In response to the recommendation, CHED issued CMO no. 46 s. 2012, introducing a typology- and outcomes-based quality assurance system. This memorandum challenged the prevailing one-size-fits-all approach, which indiscriminately applied university requirements to all HEIs, regardless of their unique missions. This approach was criticized for leading to inefficiencies, as it forced many HEIs to allocate scarce resources toward meeting quality outcomes that were often irrelevant to their specific context and objectives. The CMO highlighted several issues with this model, including the dilution of university metrics to fit the broader HEI landscape, the inadvertent encouragement of all HEIs to aspire to university status (thus causing a crisis of purpose), and the missed opportunities in supporting the country's innovation system due to the lack of focused support for strategic research in universities.

Drawing from regional and national consultations before its release, the CMO categorized HEIs into horizontal types based on the functionalities of the diverse HEIs, particularly the qualifications and competencies of graduates, the nature of offered degree programs, the qualifications of faculty members, the types of available learning resources and support structures, and the nature of linkages and community outreach activities. The CMO classified private HEIs into 3 types: (a) professional institutions, (b) colleges, and (c) universities. Generally, professional institutes produce graduates with the technical know-how of professional industries, colleges produce graduates in response to the needs of their local communities, and universities emphasize research activities. Notably, the 3 horizontal types outlined by the memorandum were consistent with the typologies recommended by EDCOM I (Congressional Commission on Education, 1991, p. 194–195). The CMO did not provide a horizontal typology of public HEIs.

In addition to this horizontal classification, the CMO established a vertical typology for private HEIs, defining them as autonomous, deregulated, or regulated. These classifications, representing different levels of quality, were operationalized differently across the various horizontal types. The SUC levels I to IV are the counterparts to the vertical typology of private HEIs. However, no equivalent vertical classification was provided for LUCs.

**EDCOM II pointed out the necessity of a more nuanced review and application of the CMO's policy.** While the CMO succeeded in raising awareness about different types of HEIs and encouraging them to reflect on their missions, the CMO faced challenges in implementation. The prevailing approach continued to be predominantly one-size-fits-all in terms of still privileging university criteria for quality assurance. Moreover, this policy framing at both the policy and implementation levels hindered a clear focus on the distinct roles of each type of HEI in national development, impacted the internal efficiency of HEIs (as they focused their resources outside their core functions), and influenced CHED's ability to provide rational support and incentives based on each HEI's mandate, functions, and operations. Furthermore, it limited the establishment of more intensive intervention and development programs for priority areas tailored to each HEI type, as initially envisioned in CMO no. 46, s. 2012.

*Horizontal typology should also characterize small and specialized institutions, such as the Philippine State College of Aeronautics, so that they could receive the appropriate funding. They identified that small, specialized institutions had to seek alternative recognition instead of the evaluation process stipulated by the CMO, specifically through legislation (EDCOM II Consultation with PASUC Representatives, 2023, Jul 31).*

**Discussions during consultations and roundtable discussions with key figures from both the public and private higher education sectors regularly highlighted the limitations and inadequacies of the current typology from the perspective of HEIs.**

According to the EDCOM II reports on these consultations, the existing horizontal typology fails to adequately consider the diverse characteristics of HEIs, as well as take into account the nuances of the labels utilized by the memorandum.

For example, a consultation held with representatives from the Association of Local Colleges and Universities (ALCU) (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 21) reported that the characteristics, and therefore functionalities, of LUCs largely depend on the vision of the local executive chiefs of LGUs. It was exemplified in the case of LUCs in Bicol, wherein many LUCs were created with the goal of producing more graduates in the region as charity schools. Therefore, in classifying LUCs in particular, stakeholder relationships with local executive chiefs, LGUs, and other local government bodies can be a defining characteristic that should be explored. Further investigation is needed to conclude whether specific stakeholder relationships are defining characteristics for SUCs and private HEIs.

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COMPUTER  
EDUCATION

19

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# MISSION

In pursuit of this vision,  
the faculty, staff, and stu  
City College of Calamba rec  
vital roles in collaborative  
the professional by promo  
responsibility, moral uprigh  
servitude, guided  
es, and values of  
nhero, Dr. Jose Riz



Likewise, a consultation held with representatives from PASUC (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 31) revealed that the horizontal typology should also characterize small and specialized institutions, such as the Philippine State College of Aeronautics, so that they could receive the appropriate funding. They identified that small, specialized institutions had to seek alternative recognition instead of the evaluation process stipulated by the CMO, specifically through legislation (EDCOM II consultation with PASUC representatives, 2023, Jul 31). Through the HB 7323, or the National Aviation Academy of the Philippines Charter, instead of undergoing horizontal typology evaluations, they sought to be appropriately classified as a professional institute to receive appropriate funding. Therefore, a better classification system must be developed to better target small, specialized institutions not only in the public sector but also in the private realm.

In addition, the consultation held with representatives from COCOPEA (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 29) illustrated that the incentives—which may not necessarily be formally operationalized—associated with each horizontal type per the CMO were identified as an issue. The representatives pointed out that the horizontal typology label of “universities” carries prestige, which private institutions actively pursue to attract students in comparison to the label “colleges.” This calls for careful consideration of nuances in the labels used when redesigning the horizontal typologies, as it may have unforeseen consequences and diminish the typology system’s effectiveness in classification and policy targeting.

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## Recommendations

**In response to these concerns, EDCOM II is actively reviewing and revising the existing horizontal typology and aims to develop a system grounded in empirical evidence that accurately reflects the current characteristics and diversity of HEIs.** To achieve this, a dedicated research team is conducting cluster analysis on big data gathered from ongoing, bottom-up empirical research. This analysis intends to identify distinct groupings within the HEI population, which could then inform more efficient and targeted policy design. This revised approach is expected to lay the groundwork for a new vertical typology, which will be drafted and subject to stakeholder consultations once an agreement is reached on the horizontal HEI types.

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## Next Steps for Year 2

### **Studies and activities focusing on year 1 priorities and issues will continue in year 2.**

Analysis of the impact of UAQTEA on equitable access to higher education will persist in the first half of year 2. Ongoing in-house data collections on student household income distributions aim to support year 1 analysis on the impact of the FHE program by profiling students in select public HEIs to analyze the issue of equitable access and the effect of the Act before and after its implementation.

### **Year 2 activities under the same priority area will address the untouched issues.**

Discussions between the PRC and CHED will be held to strengthen coordination to ensure common defined learning outcomes and competencies and corresponding assessments for regulated professions; how minimum curricular requirements can be reduced to give space for HEI innovations aimed at achieving learning outcomes; and a corresponding desk review of CHED Policies, Standards, and Guidelines. These activities aim to illuminate ways to improve the quality of higher education in terms of learning outcomes and program relevance.

Filling the professional supply and skills gap, specifically for health sciences and agriculture, is crucial for the Philippine economy and social welfare. Therefore, projections of human resource development needs and skills gaps, specifically gaps in higher education programs with rising future demands (e.g., computer science and health sciences), in Philippine HEIs will be made to bridge the theory–practice gap. Therefore, EDCOM II will collaborate with the National Academy of Science and Technology to propose a road map for the health sciences and agricultural sciences for extensive consultation and stakeholder deliberations.

### **Finally, CHED’s current regulatory framework will be reviewed in year 2.**

A developmental regulatory framework to enhance its dual role: to nurture an environment conducive to educational innovation and progress while enforcing standards that guarantee the reliability and credibility of higher education offerings. In collaboration with the Philippine Institute for Development Studies and the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies President Edgardo J. Angara Fellowship, the policy research and

activities to address this issue include a review of regulatory frameworks in other countries, CHED support for programs to enhance quality, its experience in regulating substandard programs/HEIs, consultations, and roundtable discussions with stakeholders to craft a regulatory framework iteratively, drawing from the draft framework of an expert.

**Under the priority area of quality assurance, a series of consultations and roundtable discussions with accreditation bodies, including profession-based agencies, will be organized.**

Collaborative efforts will be fostered through dialogues with key entities, such as the Philippine Technological Council and the Philippine Information and Computing Accreditation Board, to create a more cooperative and inclusive environment for quality assurance. This initiative is complementary to the ongoing empirical research to deduce existing horizontal typologies. Year 2 activities will also focus on the role of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) in ensuring a common understanding and consistent delivery of quality higher education nationwide. Such articulation and the discussions in 2024 emanating from it would help identify policy gaps, enable transparent and uniform application of quality standards, and foster accountability and continuous improvement among higher education institutions. The target of the Commission is to institutionalize the PQF by ensuring that the learning outcomes of qualifications at PQF Levels VI (bachelor level) to VIII (doctoral level), which for now are clearly within the purview of higher education and Level V that higher education shares with technical and vocational education, are achieved at the level they are at.

**In year 2, EDCOM II will also delve into the remaining priority areas to further explore the current situation of the higher education landscape.**

Firstly, for the priority area of digital transformation and artificial intelligence in higher education, roundtable discussions and research will be held to review CHED's smart campuses, the state of digital transformation in HEIs, and the feasibility of countrywide procurement, subscription, and use of educational technologies. Regarding artificial intelligence (AI), its adoption in higher education is revolutionizing the learning landscape, opening new frontiers for teaching, research, and administration. Activities under this priority area aim to determine areas for legislative or executive interventions to boost the relatively weak digital skills of Filipinos compared to neighboring countries (World Bank, 2022).



Secondly, for the priority area of graduate education, research studies will be focused on global trends in graduate education; the distribution, profile, and quality of current graduate programs; the motivation of learners to pursue graduate education; and the reasons for the high attrition rate in graduate school.

Thirdly, for the priority area of research, innovation, and enterprise, activities and research studies will be conducted to survey other countries' effective research and innovation models, best practices among the HEIs, the experience and challenges of existing science and technology (S&T) parks, and the feasibility of integrating eligible university-based S&T parks into the Philippine Economic Zone Authority's system of economic zones. EDCOM II will also be involved in discussions with the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Energy, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and other agencies engaged in research, innovation, technology transfer, and enterprise to help enhance the synergy of HEIs with the agencies with delineated functions in the Philippine innovation ecosystem.

Lastly, for the priority area of internationalization of higher education, research studies and activities aim to profile the international students in the country, investigate the historical inflow, identify benchmarks for transnational education, review the Transnational Higher Education Act, and examine the constraints to the hiring of foreign faculty and dual citizens in public HEIs. Internationalization efforts are deemed to enrich educational experiences, foster cultural competence, facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices across borders, and enhance the quality of education and research. In an increasingly interconnected world, internationalization is crucial for broadening the horizons of students and faculty, fostering mutual understanding and respect, and driving innovation through diverse perspectives.

1. Isahan
2. Dalawahan
3. Maramihan

Paglalahad  
Basahin ng sabay-sabay ang mga salitang nasa tsart.

Isahan	Dalawahan	Maramihan
ama	mag-ama	mag-aama
kapatid	magkapatid	magkakapatid
bata	magkabata	magkakabata
guro	magkaguro	magkakaguro
kalaro	magkalaro	magkakalaro



## TEACHER EDUCATION

# Let Teachers Teach: Unburdening the Classroom Teacher

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It is well established that quality learning is contingent upon quality teaching (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000; UNESCO, 2015; World Bank, 2010). According to the World Bank Group (2018, p. 139), “education systems perform best when their teachers are respected, prepared, selected based on merit, and supported in their work.”

*“Education systems perform best when their teachers are respected, prepared, selected based on merit, and supported in their work.”*

— World Bank Group

**Even predating the global concern for “teacher quality,” the first Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM I) had already advocated for 2 critical measures:** (a) enhancing preservice teacher education and introducing incentives to align teaching rewards with the importance of teacher education as a career and (b) advancing the professionalization of teachers through licensure exams and an increase in the basic minimum wage salary (EDCOM I, 1991).

Given the EDCOM I recommendations, the following laws were enacted:

- Republic Act (RA) No. 7784, An Act to Strengthen Teacher Education in the Philippines by Establishing Centers of Excellence, Creating a Teacher Education Council for the Purpose, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes; and
- RA 7836, or the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994.

RA 7784 was supposed to enhance the quality of teacher education in the country by establishing centers of excellence (COEs) and a Teacher Education Council (TEC). COEs were created to serve as models of excellence in teacher education. At the same time, the TEC was supposed to be responsible for formulating policies, plans, and programs to uplift teacher education standards.

RA 7836 established the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) as the government agency responsible for the licensure and registration of teachers. The law sets the standards and requirements for the licensure examination for teachers and prescribes the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers. RA 7836 was meant to ensure that teachers in the Philippines meet specific qualifications and adhere to professional standards to improve the overall quality of education in the country.

In other words, the institutional reforms proposed to improve teacher quality were implemented. However, the desired changes were generally unobserved (EDCOM II, 2023d).

**Teacher reforms continued beyond EDCOM I.** In the late 1990s to 2000s, with the increased international focus on “teacher quality,” requirements regarding the education of teachers were strengthened, and closer ties between teacher training institutions and universities were established in many nations (Cochran-Smith, 2021). In the Philippines, a framework of teacher quality and the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) were institutionalized to implement the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (Bautista et al., 2009; World Bank, 2022). Promulgated in 2006, the NCBTS was unprecedented because it was the product of agreement among stakeholders on the meaning of good teaching and competent teachers (Bautista et al., 2009).

The K to 12 Reform (RA 10533) in 2013 also changed the landscape of teacher quality requirements in the Philippines (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017). Given the emphasis of K to 12 on learner centeredness, inclusion, and relevance (DepEd, 2019), the reform focused on the need for high-quality teachers who are adequately equipped and prepared to assume the roles and functions of K to 12 teachers.

One of the critical reforms following K to 12 was DepEd’s adoption of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) in 2017 (World Bank, 2022). The PPST, “which is built on NCBTS, complements the reform initiatives on teacher quality from pre-service education to in-service training” (DepEd, 2017, p. 3). It makes explicit what teachers should know, be able to do, and value to achieve competence and improved student learning outcomes through well-defined domains, strands, and indicators (DepEd, 2017; World Bank, 2022). It also articulates the expected competencies of all K to 12 teachers in 7 domains, broken down by teacher experience and career stages.

*In other words, the institutional reforms proposed to improve teacher quality were implemented. However, the desired changes were generally unobserved (EDCOM II, 2023d).*

The National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) is also being reformed and is responsible for continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and school leaders (DepEd, 2019; World Bank, 2022). With its transformation, NEAP designs, develops, and delivers professional development for teachers, school leaders, and other teaching-related personnel and maintains training standards and the quality of training delivery (DepEd, 2019; World Bank, 2022). Meanwhile, RA 10912 (CPD Law of 2016) required teachers to complete CPD credit units as a prerequisite for their license renewal.

Finally, the global pandemic has spurred transformative changes in teaching and assessment methods within the education system (Bautista & Aranas, 2023; UNESCO Institute for Statistics et al., 2022), such as using information and communications technology (ICT) and a variety of teaching-learning modalities.

Despite all these shifts and reforms, persistent challenges continue to impact teacher performance (Bautista & Aranas, 2023; Sinsay-Villanueva & Orbeta, 2023).

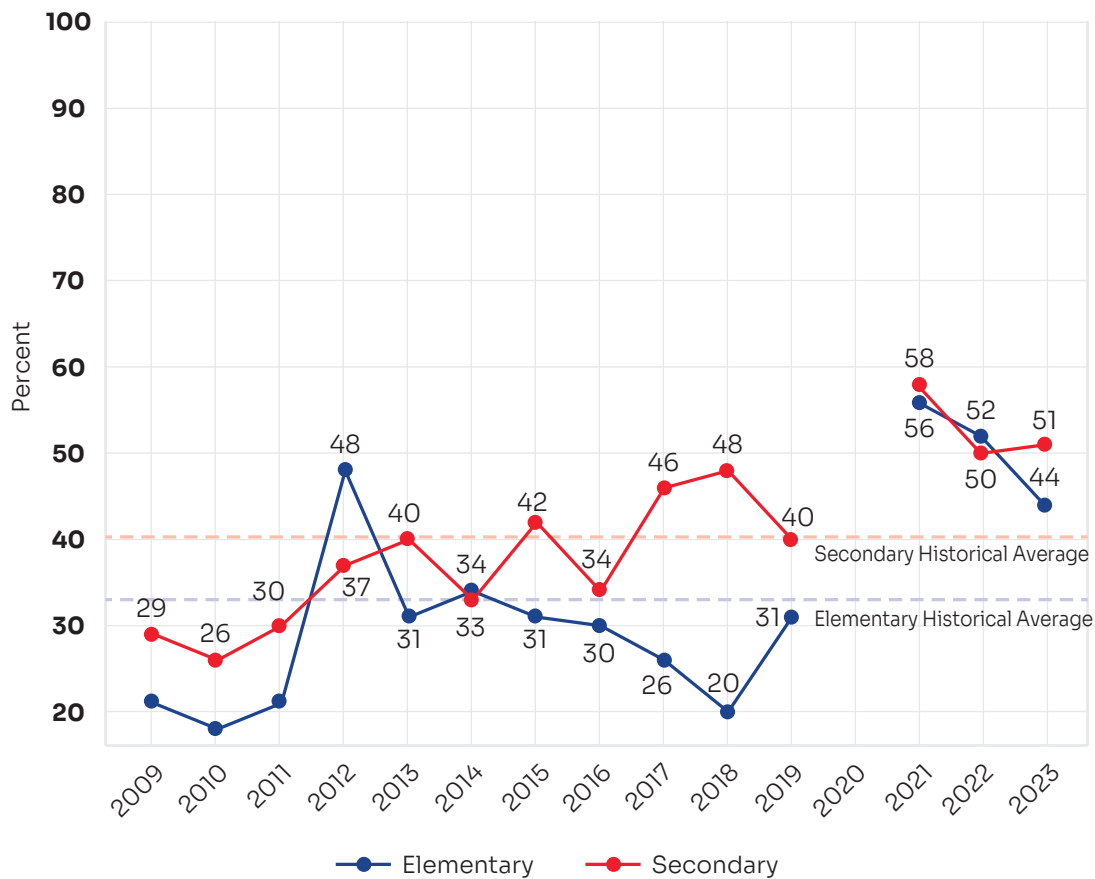
**The underperformance of teacher education in the licensure examinations is a significant concern.** Problems include the fact that only an average of 33% (elementary) and 40% (secondary) passed the Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (BLEPT) from 2009 to 2023 (see Figure 1). This is lower than the passing rates for other professional board exams, as noted by Generalao et al. (2018) and the Philippine Business for Education (PBE, 2023, as cited in Bautista & Aranas, 2023).

However, it must be pointed out that the passing rates have increased for the past 3 years (2021–2023).

*Only an average of 33% (elementary) and 40% (secondary) passed the Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers from 2009 to 2023.*

**FIGURE 1**

**Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (BLEPT), 2009–2023**



Note: Data for the years 2009–2019 were sourced from the Philippine Business for Education (PBE) report titled “Are We Properly Preparing Our Future Teachers? An Analysis of the BLEPT Performance of Teacher Education Institutions in the Philippines: 2010–2022” (PBE, 2023, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uHiKwPp1bvrp2HEK76oLwZ9HDbGFd11e/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uHiKwPp1bvrp2HEK76oLwZ9HDbGFd11e/view?usp=share_link)). Data for the years 2021–2023 were obtained from the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) website.

The Committee aims to gain insights to encourage more students to enter the teaching profession, review teacher licensing, and discuss the best approach for the professional development of existing educators in these stages.

Apart from average individual passing rates, the passing rates of teacher education institutions (TEIs) is also noteworthy. According to data from the PRC, between 2012 and 2022, there were 77 (4.92%) higher education institutions (HEIs) offering Bachelor of Elementary Education and 105 (4.46%) offering Bachelor of Secondary Education that maintained a consistent record of zero passing rates for their graduates in BLEPT.



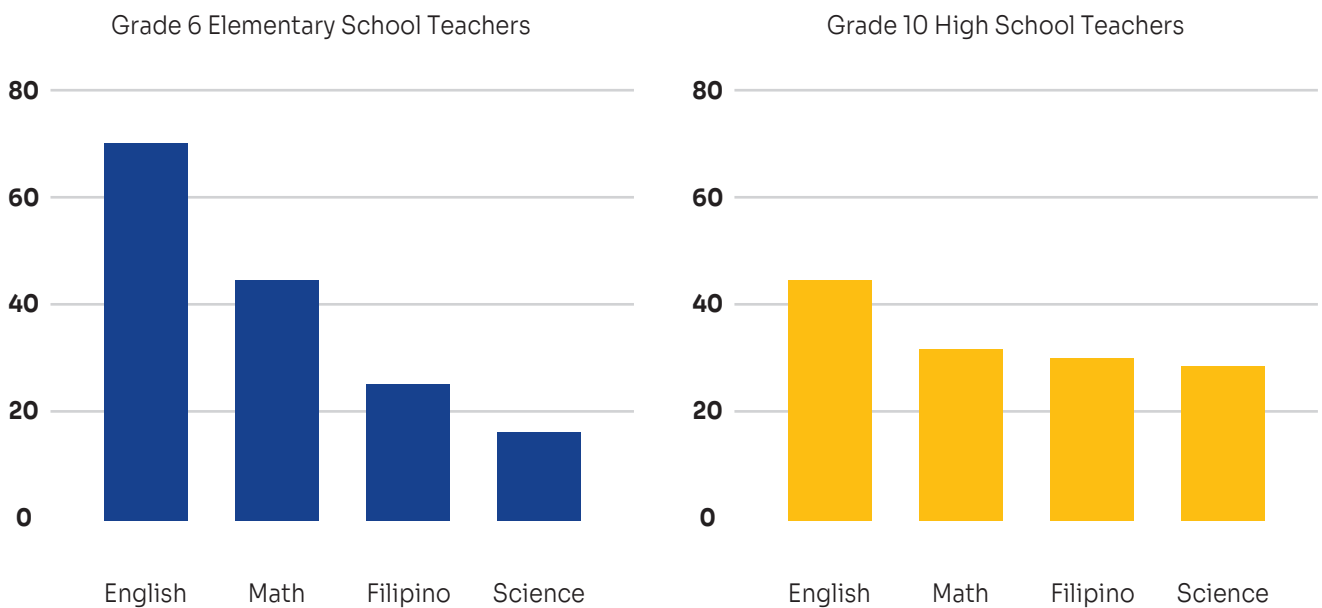
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**Low-level content mastery poses another significant challenge within the educational landscape.** Challenges persist in the realms of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical competencies, particularly in the early grades and high school levels (DepEd, 2022, as cited in Bautista & Aranas, 2023; RCTQ, 2017; World Bank Group & Australian Aid, 2016). According to the 2017 Teacher Development Needs Study by the Philippine National Research Center for Teacher Quality (RCTQ), “a large proportion of DepEd teachers are poorly prepared to deliver the K to 12 curriculum in Filipino, English, Mathematics, and Science in Grades 6, 8, and 10” (p. 2). The same study also found a deficiency in teachers’ higher-order thinking skills (i.e., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) (RCTQ, 2017). Similarly, a World Bank study (2016) showed that knowledge of subject matter among elementary and high school teachers could be better in most subjects. Except for English at the elementary school level, the average elementary or high school teacher could answer fewer than half of the questions on the subject content tests correctly (World Bank, 2016) (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2**

**Percent of Questions Answered Correctly by the Median Teacher, 2014**



Source: World Bank (2016)

**It is also widely recognized that teacher work demands, including administrative responsibilities and community service, pose substantial challenges.** These demands consume significant amounts of time that could otherwise be dedicated to classroom teaching. According to Sinsay-Villanueva and Orbeta (2023), public school teachers typically spend more than 8 hours daily, or 40 hours a week, fulfilling their functions due to additional paperwork and ancillary tasks.

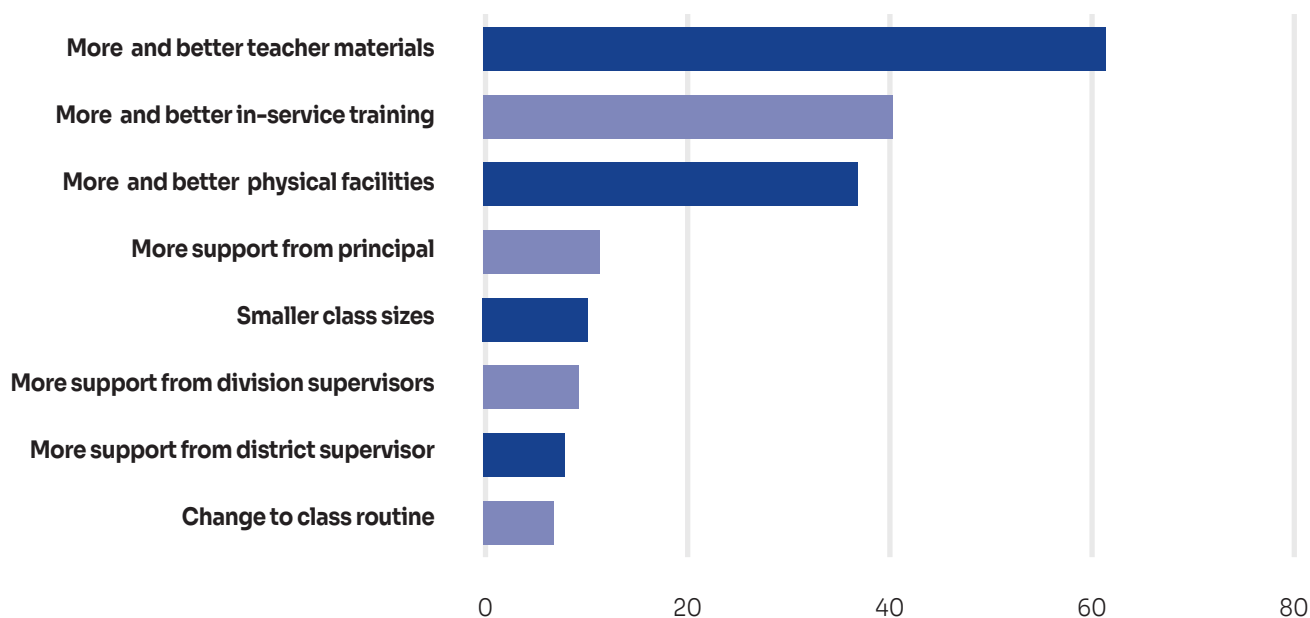
**Despite a high percentage of teachers in the Philippines receiving annual in-service training, the quality and relevance of professional development (PD) programs are flagged as lacking, and Grade 10 teachers identify the need for better teaching materials and facilities.**

In a 2015 report on the global quality of teachers, UNESCO stated that an adequate pool of teachers is not enough: “Equally important is ensuring that teachers are well trained, motivated and supported” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 3). However, the World Bank Group (2018) highlighted how most of the teacher PD around the world is “inconsistent and mostly theoretical” (p. 131). There is also a lack of institutionalization of ways to effectively motivate and mentor teachers (World Bank Group, 2018).

In the Philippines, the percentage of teachers who receive some annual in-service training is high even when compared to levels in high-income developed economies (World Bank, 2016). According to the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) and Quantitative Service Delivery Survey (QSDS) data on the in-service training received by sampled teachers in 2013 and 2014, more than three-quarters of all basic education teachers had received some in-service training (World Bank, 2016).

*“A large proportion of DepEd teachers are poorly prepared to deliver the K to 12 curriculum in Filipino, English, Mathematics, and Science in Grades 6, 8, and 10.”*

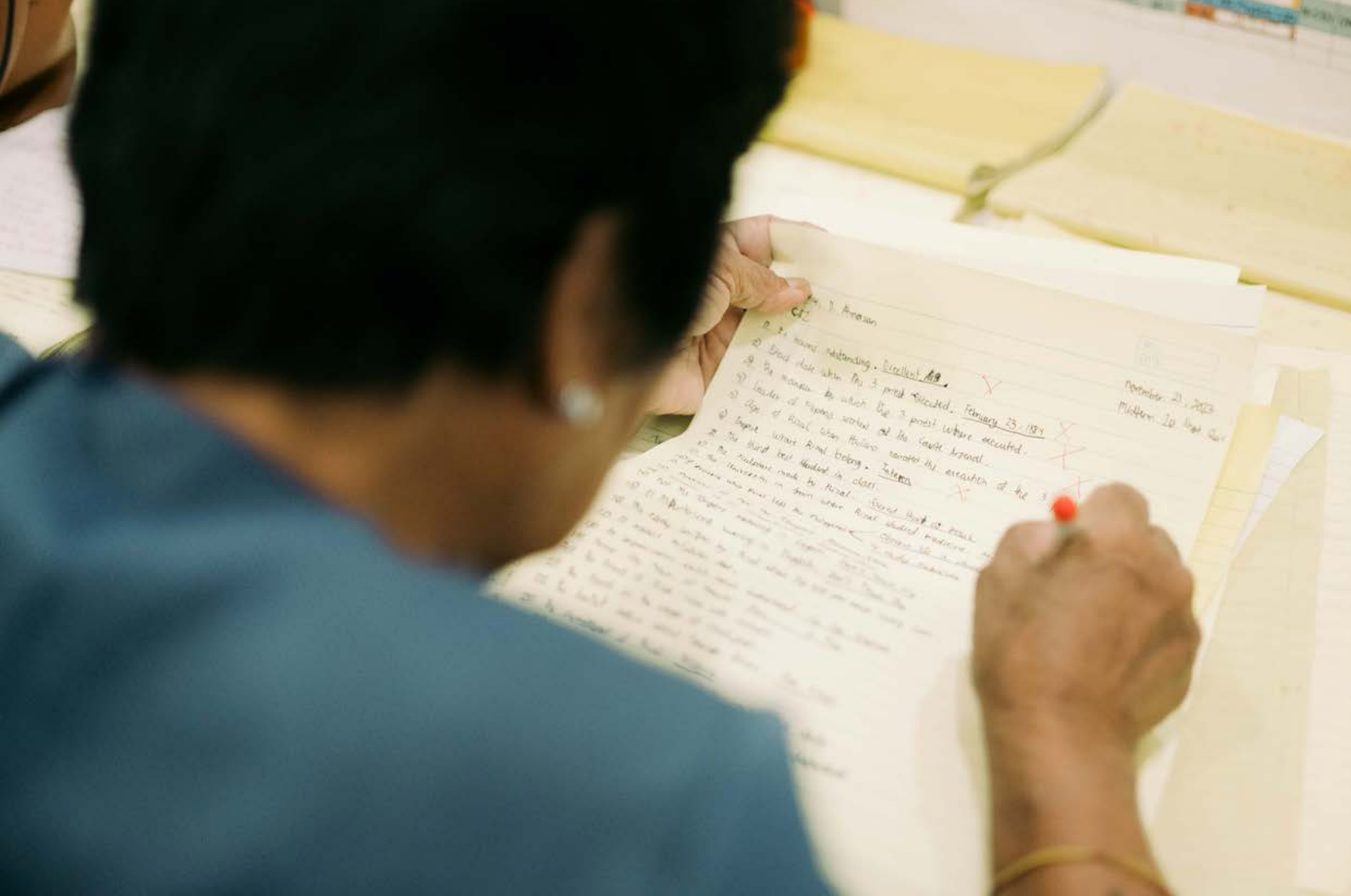
—2017 Teacher Development Needs

**FIGURE 3****Distribution of Grade 10 High School Teachers' Preferred Additional Support for Enhancing Classroom Teaching in 2014: A Percentage Analysis**

Source: World Bank Group (2016, Jun)

While many teachers in the Philippines received some PD, it was less than in most other countries (World Bank, 2016). In 2013 and 2014, the average Grade 10 high school teacher received approximately 5 to 7 days of in-service training, less than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey average of approximately 8 days (World Bank, 2016). The quality and relevance of PD programs for Filipino teachers have also been flagged as lacking (World Bank, 2023).

Apart from PD opportunities, Grade 10 teachers in 2014 also indicated (a) more and better teaching materials and (b) more and better physical facilities as the support they most need to improve their classroom teaching (World Bank, 2016) (see Figure 3).



One teacher development (TD) framework, the one the OECD used in its Teacher Education Pathway Model, stresses that the TD factors and stages cannot be dealt with piecemeal but rather as a whole (Roberts-Hull et al., 2015, as cited in Sinsay-Villanueva & Orbeta, 2023). This means that a systems-thinking approach must be taken and that the different components in teacher development (preservice, in-service, and governance) must work together as a whole to achieve a common objective (Ndarahutse et al., 2019).

This underscores the significance of EDCOM II's priority areas, which revolve around aligning the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the PRC, and DepEd (including the TEC) concerning teacher education and development, preservice, and in-service training and development, encompassing teacher welfare. Despite numerous reform initiatives, the persistent need for improvement in teacher quality emphasizes the need for comprehensive measures. It is crucial to address these factors comprehensively, understanding their interconnections and contributions to the overall system, to achieve sustained enhancements in teacher performance and the overall effectiveness of the education system. During the first year, the EDCOM II concentrated on aligning CHED, the PRC, and DepEd, with a specific focus on in-service training and development.



- Bawal Bumusina



- Bawal Magtapon ng Basura



- Bawal Manigarilyo



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## Priority 16: Alignment of CHED, the PRC, and DepEd (including the TEC) on Teacher Education and Development

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Issue: CHED, the PRC, and DepEd lack clarity and coordination in their respective roles and responsibilities related to teacher development and education.

### EDCOM II Findings

**The current status of teacher development and education work delineation among CHED, the PRC, and DepEd remains uncertain,** as indicated by EDCOM II (2023). While RA 7784, has already been amended by RA 11713, “Excellence in Teacher Education Act,” passed on April 27, 2022 (and its Implementing Rules and Regulation officially published on May 26, 2023), the strengthened TEC (see the illustration below for its composition) is not yet in place.



Secretary  
of DepEd as  
Chairperson



Chairperson of  
CHED as  
Vice-Chairperson



Director-General of  
Technical Education  
and Skills Development  
Authority (TESDA)



Executive Director of the National  
Commission for Culture and the  
Arts (NCCA)



Chairperson of the  
Professional Regulation  
Commission (PRC)

According to former Cabinet secretary Karlo Nograles, the amendment of the law “provides a clearer, stronger, and more responsive legislative and legal framework that can enable the TEC to carry out its original mandate of strengthening teacher education” (RCTQ, 2020, par. 8).

Apart from broadening the mandate and functions of the TEC “to ensure the link and alignment of pre-service education with in-service education and improve the coordination between the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and other agencies like the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in order to improve teacher education outcomes” (RCTQ, 2020, par. 9), the law also codifies the NEAP transformation and NEAP’s role to collaborate with TEC to promote coherence and continuity between preservice and in-service education.

The overview highlights a recurring issue of consistently low performance in the BLEPT over time. This issue holds significance as it points to a misalignment between the content covered in teacher education curricula and the material assessed in the licensure examinations (EDCOM II, 2023).

PBE (2023) recommends reviewing the responsiveness of teacher education curriculum and BLEPT using DepEd’s PPST as a basis.

DepEd holds the majority of the teacher population share in the country, with around 900,000 public school teachers as of 2022, and is responsible for paving the road map for improving teacher quality. To guide the teachers’ progression, the department identified and established a set of competencies through DepEd Order (DO) No. 47, s. 2017, “National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).” Despite DepEd being a member of the technical panel of teacher education, it appears that CHED does not actively monitor and review the incorporation of PPST in TEIs.

As for the PRC, its Enhanced Table of Specifications for BLEPT under Board Resolution No. 11 (s. 2022) includes the PPST, but the process of validating the questions against the teacher standards is still unclear. The TEC and the PRC have yet to develop a process where the former could review and validate the alignment of test questions with the PPST (EDCOM II, 2023). In addition, the range of BLEPT exams has not been expanded to align with the modifications in the CHED PSGs. While PSGs have been established for various programs such as Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education, Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Sciences, Bachelor of Physical Education, Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education, Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education, Bachelor of Special Needs Education, and Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, as outlined in CHED CMOs 76–82, s. 2017, the BLEPT currently remains confined to 2 categories: one for elementary-level teachers and another for secondary-level teachers.

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## Recommendation

Conducting an independent study is needed to assess the PRC's true level of policy adoption and scrutinize the validity and reliability of the BLEPT. Such a systematic evaluation by educational authorities aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the examination, ensuring it accurately gauges individuals' preparedness for a successful teaching career.

*While PSGs have been established for various programs . . . as outlined in CHED CMOs 76–82, s. 2017, the BLEPT currently remains confined to 2 categories: one for elementary-level teachers and another for secondary-level teachers.*





## Reforming Teacher Professionalization Modalities

**On June 22, 2023, Representatives Go, Romulo, Benitez, Dimaporo, and Garcia filed House Bill (HB) No. 8559, amending RA 7836 (Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994).** The bill introduces alternative teacher professionalization approaches, such as (a) the accreditation of TEI programs by the TEC, where graduates must submit a portfolio demonstrating the achievement of teaching professional standards in place of a written examination; and (b) the recognition or submission of a teaching experience portfolio, including the attainment of teaching professional standards, for individuals with a certain number of years in teaching. The ongoing discussion of this bill will be closely monitored by EDCOM II until it is enacted into law.

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## Priority 18: In-Service Training and Development, Including Teacher Welfare

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Issue: The unclear and uncoordinated distribution of ancillary and administrative tasks among DepEd, government agencies, and teachers burdens teachers with responsibilities beyond teaching, infringes upon their prescribed hours, hampers professional development, and compromises the quality of education.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

In the context of DepEd, ancillary and administrative tasks encompass various responsibilities and functions extending beyond the core duties of teaching and direct student engagement.

**Unfortunately, the collaboration between different government agencies and DepEd in implementing ancillary and administrative tasks places a significant burden on teachers, leading to concerns about the infringement on their prescribed teaching hours and professional development.** For example, the Department of Health involves DepEd in tasks related to the health and nutrition of students. This involvement includes implementing health programs and vaccination campaigns, as well as providing nutritional support to enhance the well-being of students. Disaster risk reduction is another function schools need to perform under RA 10121, also known as the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010. As outlined in DO 21, s. 2015, schools need to develop emergency response plans, conduct safety drills, and implement measures to guarantee a secure learning environment.

While ancillary and administrative tasks are intended to contribute to the overall functioning of schools and student welfare (refer to Table 1), teachers frequently express feelings of being overburdened with these responsibilities,

as highlighted in EDCOM II consultations (2023, Jul 28; 2023, Oct 26). In numerous consultations conducted by EDCOM II (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 3–4; 2023, Aug 3–4; 2023, Sep 20–21), teachers have conveyed that, given the additional tasks, their working hours are insufficient. However, they find it challenging to voice these concerns within the school setting. They have also observed that Bids and Awards Committee tasks have been shifted to teachers.

In other words, the prescribed 6-hour teaching load, coupled with the designated 2-hour allocation for teaching-related tasks and preparation, is routinely exceeded just to meet the demands of daily deliverables.

This burden hinders teachers from delivering quality education and pursuing their professional development (EDCOM II, 2023).

**Moreover, the additional tasks do not align with the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers mandated under RA 4670**, particularly on the hours of work and remuneration of a public school teacher, to wit:

*Sec 13. Teaching Hours. Any teacher engaged in actual classroom instruction shall not be required to render more than six hours of actual classroom teaching a day, which shall be so scheduled as to give him time for the preparation and correction of exercises and other work incidental to his normal teaching duties: Provided, however, that where the exigencies of the service so require, any teacher may be required to render more than six hours but not exceeding eight hours of actual classroom teaching a day upon payment of additional compensation at the same rate as his regular remuneration plus at least twenty-five per cent of his basic pay.*

*Sec 14. Additional Compensation. Notwithstanding any provision of existing law to the contrary, co-curricula and out of school activities and any other activities outside of what is defined as normal duties of any teacher shall be paid an additional compensation of at least twenty-five per cent of his regular remuneration after the teacher has completed at least six hours of actual classroom teaching a day.*

*In the case of other teachers or school officials not engaged in actual classroom instruction, any work performed in excess of*

*eight hours a day shall be paid an additional compensation of at least twenty-five per cent of their regular remuneration.*

*The agencies utilizing the services of teachers shall pay the additional compensation required under this section. Education authorities shall refuse to allow the rendition of services of teachers for other government agencies without the assurance that the teachers shall be paid the remuneration provided for under this section.*

As early as 1966, when the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers was enacted, it gave primary importance to teachers' work hours to ensure they were not hampered by longer teaching hours or overburdened by additional tasks. Only in the exigencies of service, as a matter of exception, are they required to render additional teaching hours and additional work outside of their normal duties. In such cases, the law ensures that they are properly compensated.

Notwithstanding such a policy, the work of the public school teachers has been overstretched over the years, and as early as EDCOM I, minimizing the nonteaching activities has become a concern.

EDCOM I recommended nonteaching activities (such as fundraising and census) to be minimized, "if not totally eliminated" (EDCOM I, 1994). Moreover, EDCOM I (1994) specified that nonteaching activities should be carefully selected by DepEd (formerly the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports) and

- (a) not negatively affect the teaching activities and professional status of teachers; and
- (b) be voluntary and paid.

*The additional tasks do not align with the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers mandated under RA 4670, particularly on the hours of work and remuneration of a public school teacher.*



**TABLE 1****Chronological Compilation of Laws, Department Orders, and Policies Impacting Teachers Over Time**

	DepEd Policies and Other Laws
<b>Journalism Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 94, s. 1992: Promulgating the Rules and Regulations Necessary for the Effective Implementation of RA 7079, otherwise known as the Campus Journalism Act of 1991
<b>YES-O Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2003: Establishment of the Youth for Environment in Schools (YES) Organization
<b>Physical Facilities in Charge</b>	Republic Act No. 7880 (1995): An Act Providing for the Fair and Equitable Allocation of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports Budget for capital Outlay DepEd Order No. 77, s. 2003: Guidelines for Coordination and Monitoring of DPWH-Constructed School Buildings DepEd Order No. 28, s. 2008: Amendments to DepEd Order No. 77, s. 2003
<b>School Grievance Committee (Coordinator)</b>	DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2004: Revision of the Grievance Machinery of the Department of Education
<b>Laboratories in Charge</b>	DepEd Order No. 48, s. 2006: Observance of Safety Measures in Science Laboratories
<b>Canteen Manager</b>	DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2007: Revised Implementing Guidelines on the Operation and Management of School Canteens in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
<b>Boy/Girl Scout Coordinator</b>	DepEd Memorandum No. 49, s. 2007: Revitalizing Boy Scouts in Schools DepEd Memorandum No. 513, s. 2009: Membership Campaign of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines
<b>Gulayan sa Paaralan Coordinator</b>	DepEd Memorandum No. 293, s. 2007: Gulayan sa Paaralan DepEd Memorandum No. 223, s. 2016: Strengthening the Implementation of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools Nationwide
<b>School Teacher in Charge (TIC)</b>	DepEd Order No. 85, s. 2003: Guidelines on the Selection, Promotion, and Designation of School Heads DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2007: The Revised Guidelines on Selection, Promotion, and Designation of School Heads
<b>Brigada Eskwela Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2008: Institutionalization of the Brigada Eskwela Program or the National Schools Maintenance Week (NSMW)
<b>Property Custodian/Supply Officer</b>	DepEd Memorandum No. 328, s. 2009: Guidelines on the Grant of Vacation Service Credits to Teachers Designated as District/School Property Custodians
<b>4Ps Coordinator</b>	DepEd Memorandum No. 110, s. 2009: National Implementation of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) DepEd Memorandum No. 2022-03-3666: Updated Instruction on School Reporting for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Republic Act No. 11310: An Act Institutionalizing the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)
<b>National Drug Education Program (NDEP) Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2009: Strengthening the National Drug Education Program (NDEP) in Schools
<b>SMEA Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2010: Creation of the Quality Management Teams (QMTs) DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2010: Adoption of KRT 3: Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework

	<b>DepEd Policies and Other Laws</b>
<b>Acceptance and Inspectorate Team</b>	<p>DepEd Order Np. 5, s. 2010: Guidelines on Inspection of DepEd Deliverables</p> <p>DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2021: Inspection and Acceptance Protocols for the Procurement of Goods in the Department of Education</p>
<b>LIS/EBEIS Coordinator</b>	<p>DepEd Order No. 68, s. 2011: Implementing Guidelines on the Operation of the Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS)</p> <p>DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2015: Learner Information System (LIS) and Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS) Updating for Beginning of School Year 2015-2016</p> <p>DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2017: Guidelines on the Updating of Status of Learners of Alternative Learning System as of End of 2016 Calendar Year in the Learner Information System (LIS)</p> <p>DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2017: Updating of Basic Education Statistics for Beginning of School Year 2017-2018 in the Learner Information System (LIS) and Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS)</p>
<b>School-Based Management Coordinator</b>	<p>DepEd Order No. 83, s. 2012: Implementing Guidelines on the Revised SBM Framework, Assessment Process, and Tool</p> <p>Republic Act No. 9155: An Act Instituting a Framework of Governance for Basic Education, Establishing Authority and Accountability, Renaming the Department of Education, Culture and Sports as the Department of Education, and for other Purposes</p>
<b>Prefect of Discipline</b>	DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012: Child Protection Policy
<b>SPG/SSG Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2014: Constitution and By-Laws of the Supreme Pupil Government and Supreme Student Government in Elementary and Secondary Schools
<b>Sports Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 25, s.2015: Implementing Guidelines on the Special Program in Sports
<b>School Improvement Plan Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2015: Guidelines on the Enhanced School Improvement Planning (SIP) Process and the School Report Card (SRC)
<b>DRRM Coordinator</b>	<p>DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2015: Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Coordination</p> <p>RA 10121: Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010</p>
<b>Health Coordinator</b>	<p>DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2016: Policy and Guidelines for the Comprehensive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (Wins) Program</p> <p>DepEd Memorandum No. 82, s. 2015: Guidelines on the Implementation of School-Based Immunization Program, with annex Department of Health Memorandum 2015-0238: Guidelines in the Implementation of School-based Immunization, anchored to Republic Act No. 10152: Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act of 2011</p>
<b>Research Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017: Research Management Guidelines
<b>GAD Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order 32, s. 2017: Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy
<b>ICT Coordinator</b>	DepEd Unnumbered Memorandum dated June 26, 2019: Designation of District and School Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Coordinators
<b>School Feeding Coordinator</b>	DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2021: Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program
<b>Clinic/Teacher Nurse</b>	DepEd-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular No. 01, s. 2021: Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of Limited Face-to-Face Learning Modality

In response to teachers' concerns in the field, DepEd recently committed to improving teachers' working conditions by reviewing its policies on teachers' workload (DepEd, 2019). The initial solution of requesting the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to create nonteaching positions in schools was based on the 2018 study conducted by DepEd about the type and amount of ancillary and administrative tasks being undertaken by teachers (DepEd, 2019). The introduction of additional nonteaching personnel at the school level aims to address the distribution of ancillary workload in schools, relieving teachers from tasks outside the teaching and learning process. The agreement with DBM was to deploy roughly 5,000 nonteaching personnel starting in 2020.

DepEd issued the DM-PHROD-2020-00235 and has deployed 18,313 Administrative Officer (AO) II personnel since 2020 to schools nationwide. Currently, there is some flexibility in the allocation of AOs to schools. According to DepEd, deployment was targeted at large schools in the first year (2020). AOs have started to be deployed to small schools, but one AO is usually assigned to a cluster of schools (DepEd Bureau of Human Resources and Organizational Development [BHROD], 2023). According to DepEd BHROD, 10,000 positions are targeted for deployment in 2024 to schools without AOs or administrative aides. The department plans to achieve a 1:1 ratio per school eventually.

However, in the job description of AO II in DM-PHROD-2020-00235, Annex B, their responsibilities encompass personnel administration, property custodianship, and general administrative support, addressing only a fraction of the 50 nonteaching/administrative tasks identified by DepEd. Despite the AO II somewhat alleviating teachers' workload, the challenges posed by additional nonteaching tasks persist.

Apart from deploying administrative personnel, DepEd has issued a policy, DO 8, s. 2023, on teachers' participation in extracurricular and voluntary activities, emphasizing that class hours should be spent on teaching. In addition, according to DepEd's BHROD and a DepEd memorandum showing the draft of the policy, a more comprehensive policy on ancillary and administrative tasks is underway.



According to DepEd, it is also conducting a study with the RCTQ to determine the school staffing structure and standards concerning school typology. Currently, there is also some uneven allocation of support staff among schools in the same size category (EDCOM II, 2023). The EDCOM II Technical Secretariat examined the authorized plantilla positions of sample national high schools (NHSs) and found that there was a stark contrast in the number of nonteaching positions for 2 very large schools: Batasan Hills NHS (4) and Leyte NHS (32). As for the small schools that were examined, it is the school with higher enrollment, Onica NHS, that has no support staff, whereas Masla NHS has one support staff position (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2****Sample Schools and Their Teaching and Nonteaching Staff**

Sample School	Teaching Positions		Sum	Nonteaching		Sum
	Filled	Unfilled		Filled	Unfilled	
<b>Size Typology: Very Large</b>						
Batasan Hills NHS (NCR) Enrollment: 15,117	505	61	566	2	2	<b>4</b>
Leyte NHS (Region VIII) Enrollment: 6,047	235	18	253	29	3	<b>32</b>
<b>Size Typology: Small</b>						
Masla NHS (CAR) Enrollment: 99	13	1	14	1	0	<b>1</b>
Onica NHS (Region XII) Enrollment: 155	8	0	8	0	0	<b>0</b>

*Note: Data for this table obtained through personal communication with DepEd staff to approximate staffing samples in schools.*

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## Recommendations

**Standardizing school staffing and organizational structure is essential to streamline workload distribution.** The provision of an AO II at the school level, while helpful, cannot alleviate all the assigned additional tasks for teachers.

**Another proposed solution involves assigning the BHROD as the clearing house for school ancillary and nonteaching tasks.** The BHROD–School Effectiveness Division is designated as the technical secretariat, as outlined in the draft department order, as cited in Region III Regional Memorandum No. 355, s. 2023. The clearing house is tasked with reviewing and proposing policies and programs and their implications for teacher workload. Additionally,

it will maintain an inventory of official school processes and tasks assigned to teachers affecting their workload, make recommendations for possible streamlining and/or harmonization, and review and provide recommendations on congressional measures with implications for teacher workload.

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**Issue:** The restrictions and challenges in the career progression of public school teachers, primarily arising from the scarcity of plantilla positions and the limitations posed by the existing quota system, hinder teachers' professional growth and mobility within the education system.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

The previous career progression system faced a fundamental challenge due to the limited availability of plantilla positions within schools and school division offices (SDOs). Teachers and school leaders have reported that despite meeting the qualifications for the Master Teacher position, opportunities for promotion are restricted by the scarcity of these positions, impacting educators' professional growth and mobility within the education system (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 26).

The quota system, which hinders teachers from pursuing promotion, was established under the Position Classification and Compensation Scheme (PCCS) (DBM Manual on PCCS, Chapter 6, 2004). In elementary schools, the Master Teacher ratio should not exceed 10% of the total authorized teacher positions in the district, with a breakdown of 6.6% for Master Teacher I and 3.4% for Master Teacher II. For secondary schools, 1 Master Teacher position is allowed per subject area, irrespective of the level, for every 5 to 7 authorized teacher (Teacher I–III) positions within the school. **When these ratios are fully occupied, or if positions are scarce, teachers frequently confront a dilemma: whether to remain in their current position, awaiting the availability of a plantilla position later, exit the teaching profession altogether, or, being cognizant of higher salary grades, transition to a principal or supervisor position, leading to the loss of some quality teachers in the classroom.**



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## Reforming Career Progression: Executive Orders, Policy Changes, and Legislative Initiatives for Public School Teachers

To address the issue of teachers' career progression, Executive Order No. 174, establishing the Expanded Career Progression System for Public School Teachers, was released on June 23, 2022. This order officially creates new teaching positions and establishes new career lines in both classroom teaching and school administration. With these changes, teachers will no longer be compelled to transition to administrative roles to achieve career growth. Additionally, DepEd released its DO 19, s. 2022, or the Merit Selection Plan, which will guide the selection, hiring, appointment, and promotions of individuals based on merit, competence, fitness, accountability, transparency, and equal opportunity.

Currently, the BHROD is in the process of crafting the implementing rules and regulations for the said system. While interventions on current policy are being initiated by EDCOM II, the ultimate goal remains to pass a law that provides the framework for the career progression of teachers in public schools. Representative Roman Romulo, co-chairperson of EDCOM II, filed a bill entitled "An Act Institutionalizing the Career Progression System for Public School Teachers and Appropriating Funds Therefor" in substitution of HB 1580 and HB 3554, which will serve as the reference bills to pass a law on the career progression of teachers, a legislation that would finally move teacher support beyond just the guarantee of security of tenure first introduced under RA 4670, or the Magna Carta of Public School Teachers more than 5 decades ago.

*"Teachers and school leaders have reported that despite meeting the qualifications for the Master Teacher position, opportunities for promotion are restricted by the scarcity of these positions, impacting educators' professional growth and mobility within the education system."*

— EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 26

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Issue: Inadequacies in teacher professional development programs and systems encompass challenges related to quality, relevance, funding, and the imperative need for comprehensive reviews

### **EDCOM II Findings**

**Recognizing the critical need for consistent professional development to address deficiencies in the competencies of the existing workforce, teacher PD programs are implemented at various levels.** These programs are supported by different components of the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF). At the central level, the NEAP and other bureaus organize PD programs, backed by the central office–managed fund. Additionally, regional offices and SDOs conduct training sessions, financially supported by the program support fund. In-service training funds, calculated as 5% of the total school maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of public elementary schools, are directly released by the (DBM to the SDOs (DO 30, s. 2021).

A 2016 World Bank study revealed that half of elementary teachers' training and two-thirds of high school teachers' training occur at the school level, while the rest is conducted by DepEd division, region, or central-level systems. To ensure the quality of these programs, NEAP released guidelines and established a recognition system, requiring alignment with professional standards for teachers and school leaders (DO 1, s. 2020).

**While teacher training frequency is undoubtedly high, and efforts to establish mechanisms for quality assurance are ongoing, the quality and relevance of these programs often fall short** (World Bank, 2016). Many surveyed in-service training programs lack a subject focus, contributing to the continual poor knowledge base of teachers (World Bank, 2023).

### **Teachers and school heads confirm issues affecting their participation.**

These issues include scheduling conflicts, training fees, unequal opportunities, limited MOOE for small schools, and redundant, non-need-based training (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 28).



With this, NEAP acknowledges the necessity for a professional development information system (PDIS) to streamline program tracking. In addressing concerns raised by teachers regarding training fees, NEAP reports establishing partnerships with Centers of Excellence as training providers, committing to fund these programs to alleviate teachers from personal expenses (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 3).

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## Recommendations

**In light of these findings, the Commission recommends reviewing the HRDF's allocation, planning, availment, and utilization processes.** Additionally, an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of NEAP's recognition system is suggested to examine the implementation of needs assessments on the ground and assist NEAP in developing a functional PDIS.

**The Commission also stresses the importance of thorough reviews and consultations, with a particular focus on priority area 17, centered on preservice teacher education.** This emphasis is rooted in the Commission's findings, highlighting the crucial need to offer equitable support to current teachers while acknowledging that deficiencies in teacher competencies originate from shortcomings in preservice teacher training.

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## Next Steps for Year 2

**EDCOM II is committed to reviewing RA 8981, also known as the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) Modernization Act of 2000.** This effort aims to enhance the alignment of education agencies.

**For the preservice priority area, gaps in preservice training and the quality of TEIs will be examined.** A review of the preservice education curriculum will be conducted, aligning it with learner needs and the revised K to 10 curriculum.

**Additionally, CHED's commitment to reviewing its guidelines will be monitored.** This review specifically targets the gradual phasing out of HEIs that score lower than 30% in the BLEPT over the last 3 years.

**Concerning in-service teacher welfare, the Commission will further look into the issue of teacher ancillary tasks.** This includes a comprehensive review of ancillary and administrative tasks alongside official directives to formulate recommendations that address workload challenges. Simultaneously, it will actively oversee and contribute insights to the ongoing development of school staffing and organizational structure. The assessment of the staffing pattern will coincide with the review of the career progression draft bill, aimed at establishing an improved career progression system and freeing teachers and school heads from dependency on allocated school plantilla positions. In anticipation of career progression and to meet specific teaching specialization needs in schools, consultations with DepEd on teacher profiling, a review of existing training programs, and an examination of hiring and deployment policies are planned to project in-service teacher reclassification.

**Lastly, the Commission will examine the existing pipeline for school principals.** This study will focus on the delineation of instructional leadership in the public school system.



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## **TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING & LIFELONG LEARNING**

# Beyond Certification: Achieving True Career Mobility and Lifelong Skills

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Following the recommendation of the First Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM I), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) was established in 1994 through Republic Act (RA) No. 7796, with the mandate “to provide relevant, accessible, high-quality and efficient technical education and skills development in support of the development of high-quality Filipino middle-level manpower responsive to and in accordance with Philippine development goals and priorities” (Republic Act No. 7796, 1994, Section 2). This new agency combined three entities previously overseeing training: the Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education under the then Department of Education, Culture and Sports, as well as the National Manpower and Youth Council and the Apprenticeship Program under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). As originally conceived, its target clientele was those with at least a secondary education.

**Several EDCOM I recommendations in technical-vocational education and training (TVET) have been successfully implemented, particularly in terms of enhancing access.**

Participation in TVET has increased steadily from only 333,789 students in 1991 (as reported by the Congressional Commission on Education in 1993) to 2.3 million students from 2017–2019 (pre-pandemic years). This was paralleled by a surge in TVET institutions nationwide from only 1,270 in 1991 to 4,197 in 2023, with a majority (91%) being privately owned.

To further support access to TVET, various socialized programs and subsidies have been initiated, such as the Private Education Student Fund Assistance, the Special Training for Employment Program, and the Training for Work Scholarship Program. Despite these efforts, a recent study conducted by Philippine Institute for Development Studies revealed that a modest percentage, ranging from 14% to 18% of students, were able to avail themselves of these programs between 2015 and 2019 (Orbeta, 2022). In a significant move toward universal access, RA 10931, also known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education, has encompassed TVET under its Tertiary Education Subsidy.

**Three key challenges remain.** First, the strengthening of industry participation in the industry boards and in the promotion of apprenticeship and enterprise-based training programs was done, but it remained limited in terms of involvement of industry boards. Second, the certification system for different levels of skilling has also since been established. As of 2023, TESDA reports the promulgation of 315 training regulations (TRs). However, 63.81% are at lower levels programs National Certificates (NCs) I and II. Third, the ability of skilling programs and certifications to actually translate to upward mobility in career occupations for their graduates remains debatable. While data shows increased employability among TVET graduates, evidence on its ability to increase income is mixed.

**Particularly, despite its efficacy in providing skills and guaranteeing superior labor market outcomes for graduates, enterprise-based training (EBT) and apprenticeship programs remain the least popular modality in TVET.** Despite the strong emphasis placed by the first EDCOM and by TESDA itself—for instance, in its National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan of 2018–2022, the agency targeted increasing EBT share from 4% in 2016 to 40% by 2022—enrollment remains low. In fact, in 2022, it accounted for only 9% of total TVET enrollment (TESDA Information and Communications Technology Office, 2023). On the other hand, enrollment in institution-based and community-based training (shorter-term skills training that does not necessarily lead to certification) accounts for the bulk of TVET enrollment.

### **Collaborative Initiatives:**

#### **TESDA’s Commitment to Training Program Enhancement**

**TESDA has expressed its support and has actively collaborated with the Commission as it reviews the policies on enterprise-based training programs (EBT) and the Apprenticeship Program.**

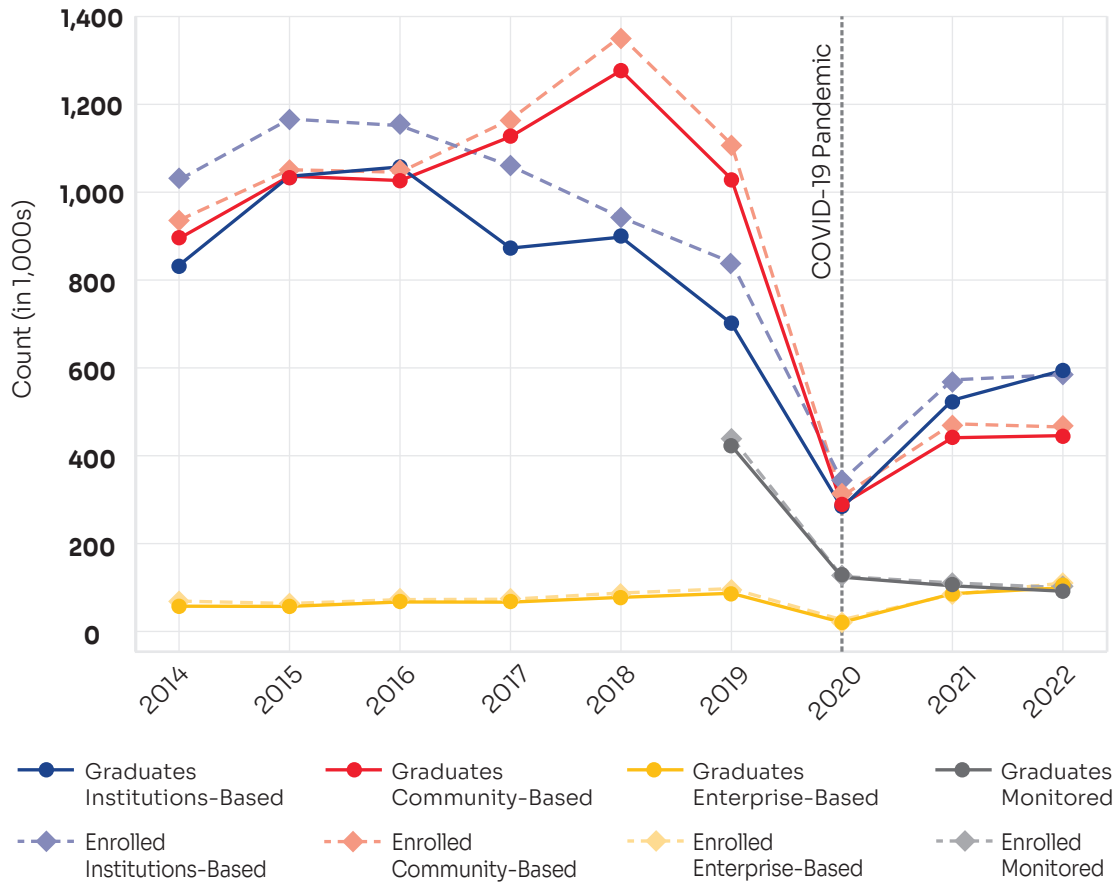
Further, in its alignment meeting with EDCOM II, TESDA has committed to prioritizing the development of higher level NCs and diploma programs.

**TABLE 1****Number of TVET Enrollees and Graduates by Delivery Mode, 2014–2022**

		Community-Based Training	Enterprise-Based Training	Institutions-Based Training
2014	Enrollees	936,274	69,138	1,028,005
	Graduates	894,603	57,417	833,659
2015	Enrollees	1,051,151	63,625	1,166,613
	Graduates	1,036,466	57,002	1,036,290
2016	Enrollees	1,045,563	72,458	1,151,644
	Graduates	1,026,582	67,080	1,057,574
2017	Enrollees	1,165,628	73,298	1,059,818
	Graduates	1,126,311	66,665	872,721
2018	Enrollees	1,355,107	87,525	942,841
	Graduates	1,276,837	77,572	897,799
2019	Enrollees	1,109,245	97,517	840,295
	Graduates	1,030,095	86,842	701,042
2020	Enrollees	307,498	26,616	342,836
	Graduates	289,148	20,582	281,820
2021	Enrollees	472,791	84,057	572,688
	Graduates	440,969	86,004	526,357
2022	Enrollees	465,428	99,396	594,500
	Graduates	445,805	190,979	594,500

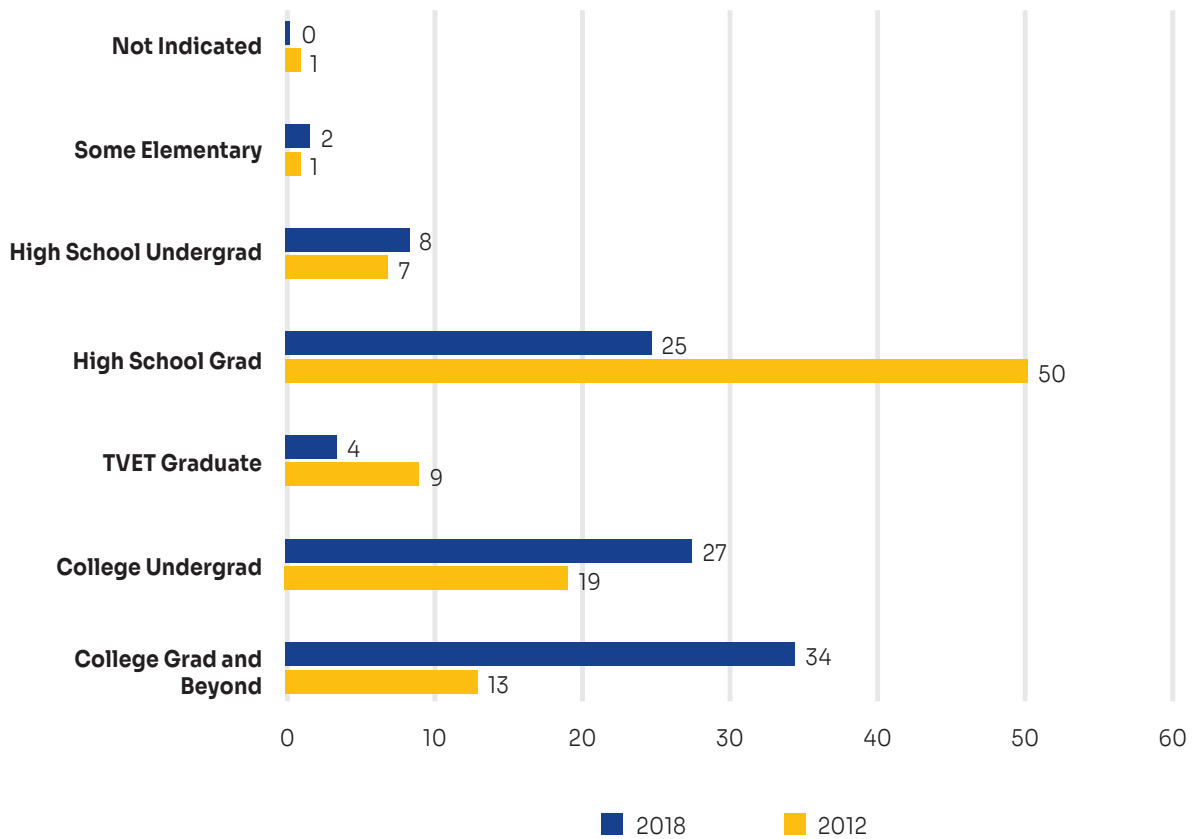
**FIGURE 1**

**Number of TVET Enrollees and Graduates by Delivery Mode, 2014–2022**



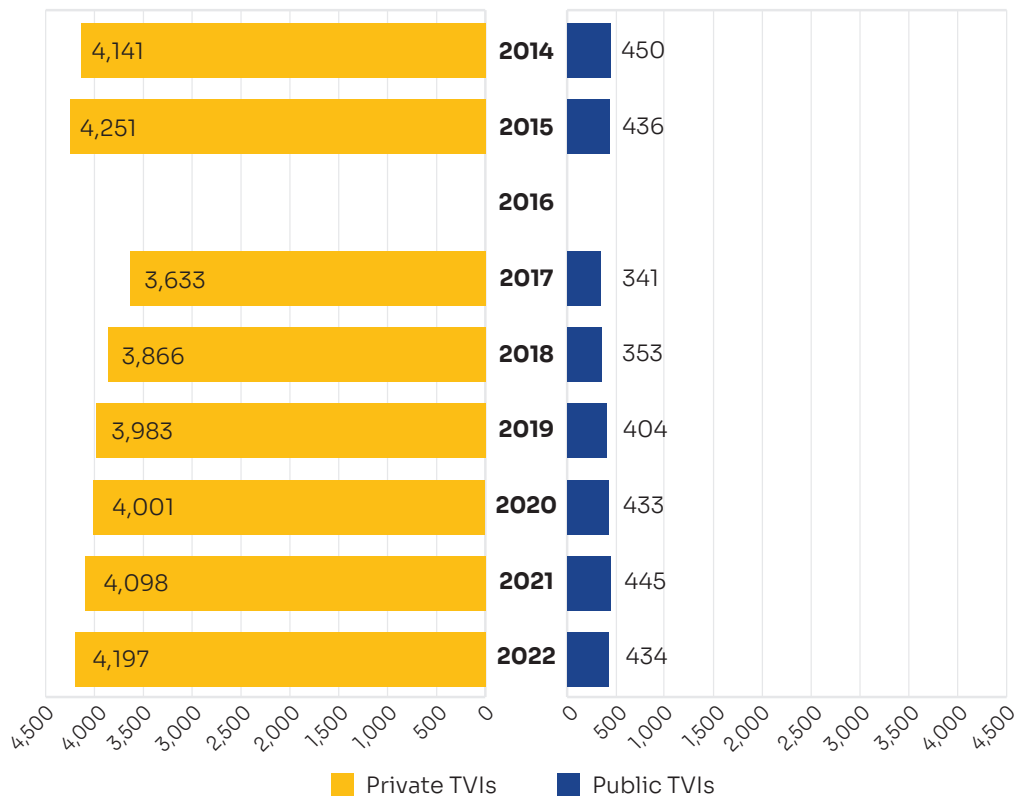
**Notably, recent trends suggest the changing demographics of those pursuing skills training.** While the profile of TVET learners has traditionally been high school graduates, the profile of enrollees in TVET has shifted in recent years, with a bulk of TVET graduates being college completers or higher (34%) since 2018 (Orbeta, 2022) (see Figure 2). This suggests a shift in the contemporary demand for TVET as a means to adjust to adverse market fluctuations, enabling college graduates to acquire additional competencies to bolster their employability in the face of evolving labor market dynamics and technological advancements (Orbeta and Paqueo, 2022). If this is the case, it requires a critical balancing act for TESDA—on the one hand, to fulfill its longstanding role as a pathway toward employment for the disadvantaged while; on the other hand, also acquiring the agility to provide on-demand and high-level skills for the 21st century.

**FIGURE 2**  
**TVET Graduates by Educational Attainment Before Training, 2012 & 2018 (%)**



Source: TESDA 2013 EIS, 2019 SETG

**FIGURE 3**  
**Public and Private TVIs, 2014–2022**



Note: No available data in the TESDA Annual Report for 2016.

Source: TESDA Annual Reports (2014–2022).

There is a substantial disparity in the numbers between public and private technical-vocational institutions (TVIs). Notably, there was a slight decline in the figures for private TVIs starting in 2017, followed by a consistent upward trend. Inversely, public TVIs experienced a significant decrease from 2014 to 2017, followed by a steady increase from 2018 to 2022.

It is also necessary to strengthen its quality assurance system (Epetia & Villena, 2023). This is vital for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of TVET programs. This process involves standards development, program registration, assessment, and certification. A regular compliance audit is also being done to ensure that the TVIs are compliant with the standards set.

*“Existing policies, and contents of the training regulations should be reviewed and amended for improvement based on industry requirement and emerging technologies for the benefit of our stakeholders.”*

—MFI Polytechnic Institute, Inc.





The challenges within the current landscape necessitate a concerted effort from policymakers, educational institutions, and industries alike. Addressing the different iterations of EBT, overcoming barriers for marginalized groups, fostering industry partnerships, securing funding, and expanding training infrastructure are all pivotal steps toward unleashing the full potential of TVET (Orbeta & Paqueo, 2022). By embracing the evolution of the world of work, stakeholders can collectively propel the growth of a skilled and adaptable workforce, ensuring the continued success and relevance of EBT in the ever-evolving landscape of industries.

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## Priority 20: Industry involvement and investment in upskilling programs

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Issue: The persistent gap between industry needs and the education system involves limited industry participation, slow policy adjustments, and challenges in the adoption of effective TVET programs, ultimately impacting the quality and relevance of education and training opportunities.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

In 1993, the first EDCOM was unequivocal on the importance of “enabling industry groups and trade association and guilds to participate as major partners in determining apprenticeable occupations, developing skills standards, conducting trade tests, and issuing certificates” (p. 211). Following the consultations of EDCOM II in its first year, it is evident that the long-observed chasm between industry and education and training remains:

Based on EDCOM consultations, the most acute challenges in enabling industry involvement are in the following areas: **(a) the engagement of industry in the development and implementation of responsive competency standards and training programs; (b) the rationalization of guidelines on EBT; and (c) the lack of palatable incentives for enterprises to engage in EBT.**

*“Some items in the requirements to have your school registered are already obsolete, and is not even available for purchase anymore.”*

—Toyota Motor Philippines School of Technology, Inc.

**Industry participation remains limited, and policies are often too slow to adjust to industry needs.** As of December 2023, there were 40 TESDA-recognized industry boards at varying levels (national, regional, and provincial). These were concentrated in only 8 industries: agri-fishery (12), information and communications technology (ICT) (8), tourism (6), manufacturing (5), construction (4), creatives (2), logistics (2), and garments (1). Given that these boards play an integral role in the design of training regulations and TVET initiatives, these pose considerable implications for training opportunities in the sector. In 2019, for example, TRs were concentrated in a relatively small number of sectors, specifically: construction (43), automotive and land transportation (37), agriculture, forestry, and fishery (34), metals and engineering (34), social, community development, and other services (SCDOS) (20), and tourism (19) (Orbeta & Corpus, 2021; TESDA, 2019a). Not coincidentally, these industries are generally those that have industry boards.

Notably, despite the availability of TRs and industry boards in agri-fisheries, in EDCOM’s Luzon consultation (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 3), the **Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Training Institute still stressed the inability of the current system to address the specific needs of the agricultural sector, citing the inadequacy of the current qualifications framework as well as the lack of infrastructure, facilities, and assessors in agriculture and fisheries.**

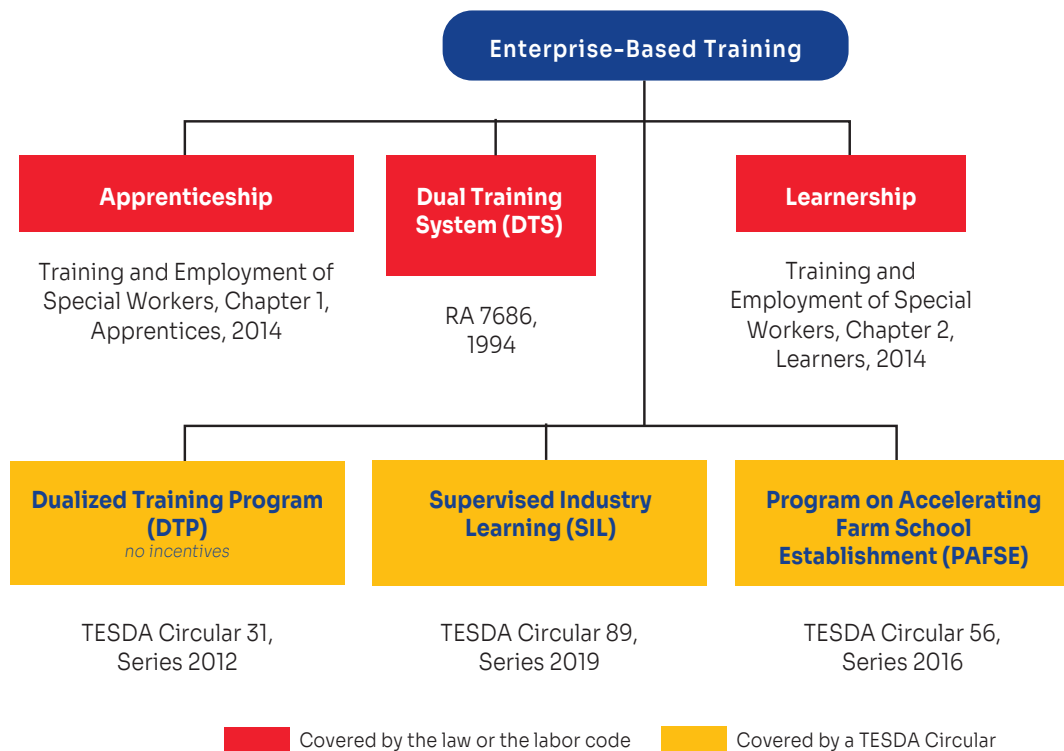
**TVIs lament the voluminous paperwork and long processing times of TESDA.** During EDCOM consultations, numerous stakeholders underscored the protracted procedure involved in formulating, validating, approving, and updating training regulations. The pressing call to “expedite paperwork for program registration” and “eliminate redundant government processes,” as articulated by the Cebu Information Technology and Business Process Management Organization, resonated prominently. Participants in the discussions expressed a collective concern that the formulation of TRs

currently demands a time frame of 2 to 3 years, a duration deemed excessively prolonged and untimely, given the swiftly evolving demands of the industry.

**Many also highlighted the lack of room for flexibility and innovation, which limited the ability of TVIs to tailor approaches to specific local and industry needs.** Throughout the consultations, a recurring concern emphasized the insufficient updating of prerequisites for program registration. This poses a significant challenge, as a TVI might excel in executing a commendable training program yet face hindrances if unable to fulfill the stipulated requirements, rendering the implementation of such programs unattainable.

**The policies governing EBT need to be rationalized.** Despite the considerable potential for significantly boosting employment rates through hands-on training that aligns with industry requirements (Asian Development Bank, 2020), the adoption of EBT continues to lag. This can be attributed to perplexing policies and fragmented implementation, as indicated by RA 7686, or the Dual Training System Act in 1994, the Bureau of Labor Relations under DOLE in 2014, and corresponding TESDA circulars (TESDA, 2019c; TESDA, 2020).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Enterprise-Based Training Chart**



*Note: On-the-job training (OJT) and internship programs that are covered by specific curriculum should not be classified under EBT.*

**During EDCOM’s regional consultations, industries consistently emphasized the formidable challenges impeding their active participation in EBT.**

Chief among these challenges are formidable barriers related to program recognition and accessing incentives. Stakeholders echoed a unanimous call for the rationalization of policies governing EBT, advocating for a simplified and potentially digitized approach to requirements to enhance overall accessibility. In addressing incentives, there is a recognized need for an inclusive framework that accommodates the diverse contexts of various industries—ranging from agriculture and manufacturing to services—and caters to both micro, small, and medium enterprises and multinationals. This stands in contrast to the current one-size-fits-all policy in place. These obstacles have impeded the organic growth and expansion of EBT (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 5), resulting in a shortage of partnerships between TVIs and enterprises. Consequently, this restriction has limited opportunities for students to acquire hands-on, real-world experience in environments that replicate the intricacies of their future workplaces (Asuncion, 2023, 15–16).

**The challenge is exacerbated by the inadequacy of allocated funds to promote enterprise-based initiatives.** EDCOM consultations found that despite being a “priority,” there are no specific funds or programs to support companies and students to encourage uptake. For instance, enterprises pinpointed two constraining factors: the increased responsibilities placed on supervisors and the shortage of personnel available for overseeing trainees. Training programs often necessitate active engagement from supervisors or managers within the enterprise, extending from designing training modules to monitoring trainees’ progress (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 4). Further, effective training relies on having a sufficient number of experienced personnel who can guide and mentor trainees. If an enterprise lacks an ample number of qualified individuals to supervise the training process, it can result in trainees not receiving the necessary guidance, potentially leading to suboptimal learning outcomes.

**EDCOM also found that there were opportunities to improve alignment between government priorities, particularly regarding the allocation of scholarships dedicated to EBT.** This is also reflected in the restricted access to the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program for specific student demographics, thereby curbing the potential impact of EBT on reaching and empowering diverse sections of the population (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 3–4). During the consultations, it was noted that there are scholarships specifically for certain demographics. This should be reviewed in terms of how allocations of specific types are made to align with the needs of trainees.

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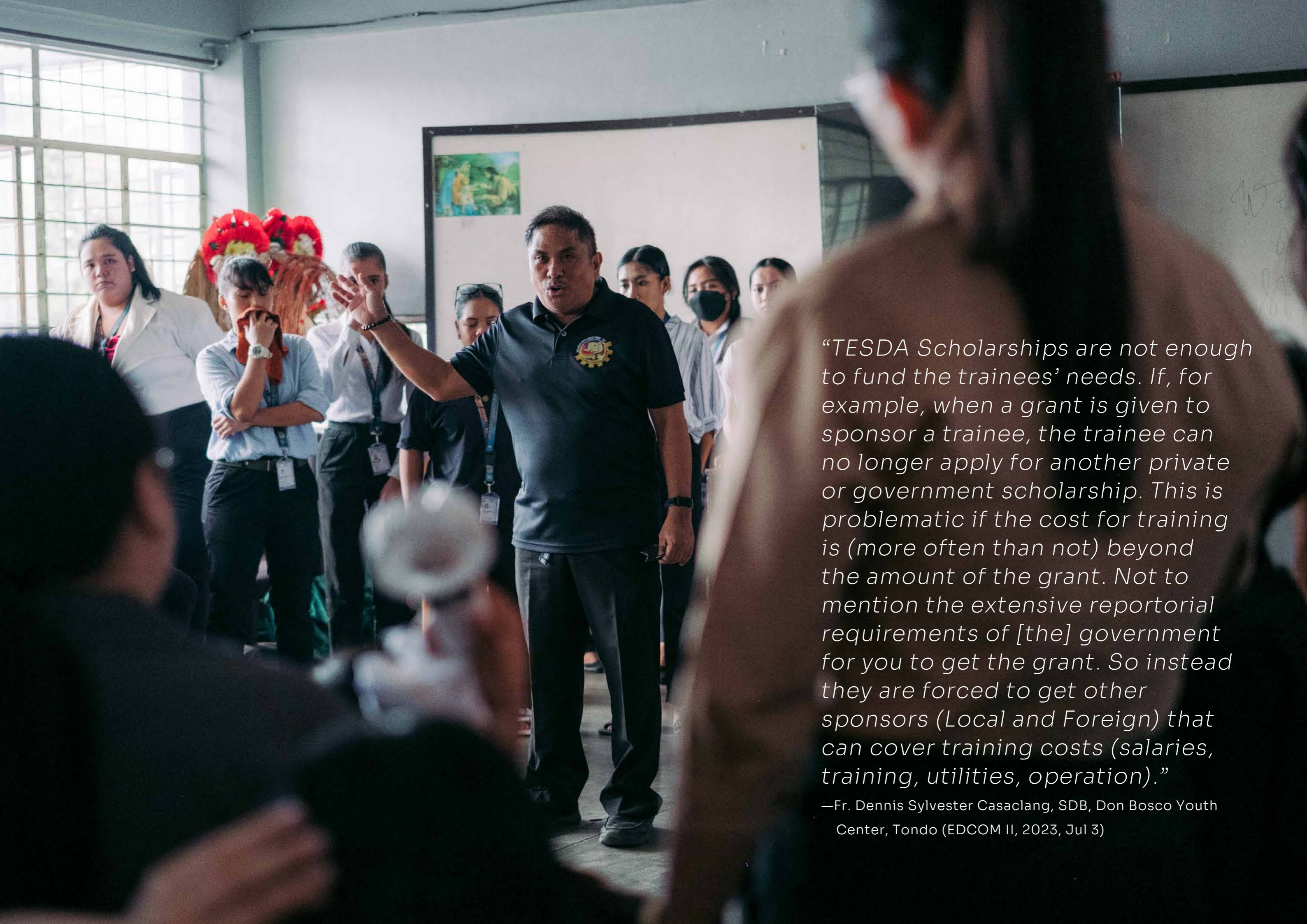
## Recommendations

**There is a need to acknowledge the unique needs and challenges faced by TVET learners.** EDCOM consultations brought to light the significant hurdles confronted by disadvantaged learners when engaging in EBT. It becomes imperative to tailor EBT programs to address the specific needs of these demographics, ensuring the inclusivity and equitable accessibility of vocational training opportunities (Epetia & Villena, 2023).

## Partnerships and Initiatives for Solving Job Mismatches

**EDCOM II Commissioners filed SBN 363 and HBN 7400, or the Enterprise-Based Education and Training to Employment Act.** This proposed measure aims to incorporate the existing EBT programs administered by TESDA and expand the provision of training programs being implemented within companies, which can be a mix of workplace training and classroom-based learning. The bill defines an “enterprise-based training program” as a mix of practical training and related theoretical instructions conducted on-and-off the job. It involves an agreement between a trainee and an enterprise on an approved enterprise-based training qualification. The bill shall apply to all work-related education and training, regardless of the following 7 modalities: (a) apprenticeship; (b) learnership; (c) on-the-job training (OJT); (d) practicum; (e) work appreciation program; (f) dual training system; and (g) internship.

**EDCOM II adopted HBN 7370 by Representative Go, creating a Tripartite Council.** The Tripartite Council introduced in the bill shall formulate policies and programs to address the job-skills mismatch in the country. It shall be a coordinating body among the government, academe and industry sectors to primarily monitor economic trends in the global and domestic markets. The industry sector shall be led by the Private Sector Jobs and Skills Corporation (PCORP), a wholly private-owned entity registered as a nonstock nonprofit corporation comprised of leaders from private industry organizations, the primary purpose of which is to partner with the government to solve job mismatch problems and deliver the workforce needed for certain priority sectors determined by the Council. One of its significant powers and functions includes driving partnerships with the private sector by identifying and developing sectoral skills councils and industry associations for creating skills road maps, mapping training programs, training institutions, and other initiatives.



*“TESDA Scholarships are not enough to fund the trainees’ needs. If, for example, when a grant is given to sponsor a trainee, the trainee can no longer apply for another private or government scholarship. This is problematic if the cost for training is (more often than not) beyond the amount of the grant. Not to mention the extensive reportorial requirements of [the] government for you to get the grant. So instead they are forced to get other sponsors (Local and Foreign) that can cover training costs (salaries, training, utilities, operation).”*

—Fr. Dennis Sylvester Casclang, SDB, Don Bosco Youth Center, Tondo (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 3)

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## Priority 21: Ensuring quality in providing TVET for better jobs

Quality assurance for TVET programs is ensured through the TESDA Quality Assured Technical Education and Skills Development Framework. This comprehensive framework encompasses various key areas, including alignment with national policies, beneficiary intake processes, adherence to competency standards such as the Unified TVET Program Registration and Accreditation System (UTPRAS) and the Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System (PTCACS), advocacy initiatives, the establishment of partnerships and linkages, measurement of output and outcome, and governance.

Additionally, RA 7796 mandates an independent review of TVET programs every 5 years, conducted by a panel duly appointed by the President, further reinforcing the commitment to maintaining and enhancing the quality of technical education and skills development. TESDA has also established Regional and Provincial Technical Education and Skills Development Committees (R/PTESDCs) to ensure alignment with policies and to convey recommendations for quality assurance to the TESDA Board. However, there is currently a lack of established performance measurement for the R/PTESDCs.



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Issue: Insufficient training regulations, ineffective collaboration with industry boards, delays in program registration, problems with the accreditation system, certification concerns, inadequate data collection, shortages of qualified instructors, gaps in assessment infrastructure, socioeconomic barriers, and nutritional challenges collectively impede the efficiency and effectiveness of the TVET sector.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

#### **There is a lack of training regulations (TRs) that prescribe the competency standards for how to do competency assessments in some industries**

(Orbeta and Pacqueo, 2022). TRs competency standards specify the knowledge and skills required for a specific qualification or occupation. As of 2023, there are 315 training regulations promulgated by the TESDA Board (TESDA Qualifications and Standards Office, 2023), which serve as the basis for the registration of around 15,000 programs in the country. In the absence of a TR, the 1,888 NTR programs have their own respective curricula, which serve as the basis for program registration. TESDA has recently issued a circular requiring the development of competency standards for all program registrations under the NTR. Area-based demand-driven TVET is the central strategy in TVET implementation, including standards development. During EDCOM consultations (EDCOM II, 2023), it was revealed that developing TRs typically spans 6 months to 2 years, primarily due to the dependency on the availability of industry practitioners.

*“There are no clear guidelines in availing the Dual Training System benefits for industry partners (50% tax incentive).”*

—Monark Foundation

**TABLE 2**

**Updated Number of Training Regulations (TRs)  
Classified by Level as of June 2023**

NC Level	Number of Qualification	%
NC I	24	7.62
NC II	177	56.19
NC III	88	27.94
NC IV	23	7.30
Trainers Methodology Level I	2	0.63
Trainers Methodology Level II	1	0.32
<b>TOTAL TRs</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Despite the existence of industry boards intended to contribute to the development of these TRs, the current status reveals that these boards have only established memoranda of agreement with TESDA, lacking concrete implementation strategies. As mentioned earlier, there are 40 recognized industry boards nationwide, primarily provincial, with only 6 holding national status (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**Number of Recognized Industry Boards per Sector**  
**and Classification as of December 2023**

Sector of the Industry Board	Number of Industry Board	NIB	RIB	PIB
Agri-Fishery	12	1	5	6
Tourism	6	1		5
Construction	4	1		3
ICT	8	2	4	2
Manufacturing	5	1	2	2
Garments	1			1
Creatives	2		1	1
Logistics	2		2	

Source: TESDA - Planning and Linkages Office (PLO)

NIB - National Industry Board

RIB - Regional Industry Board

PIB - Provincial Industry Board

Cells highlighted in red means there are no industry boards in either the National, Regional, or Provincial levels.

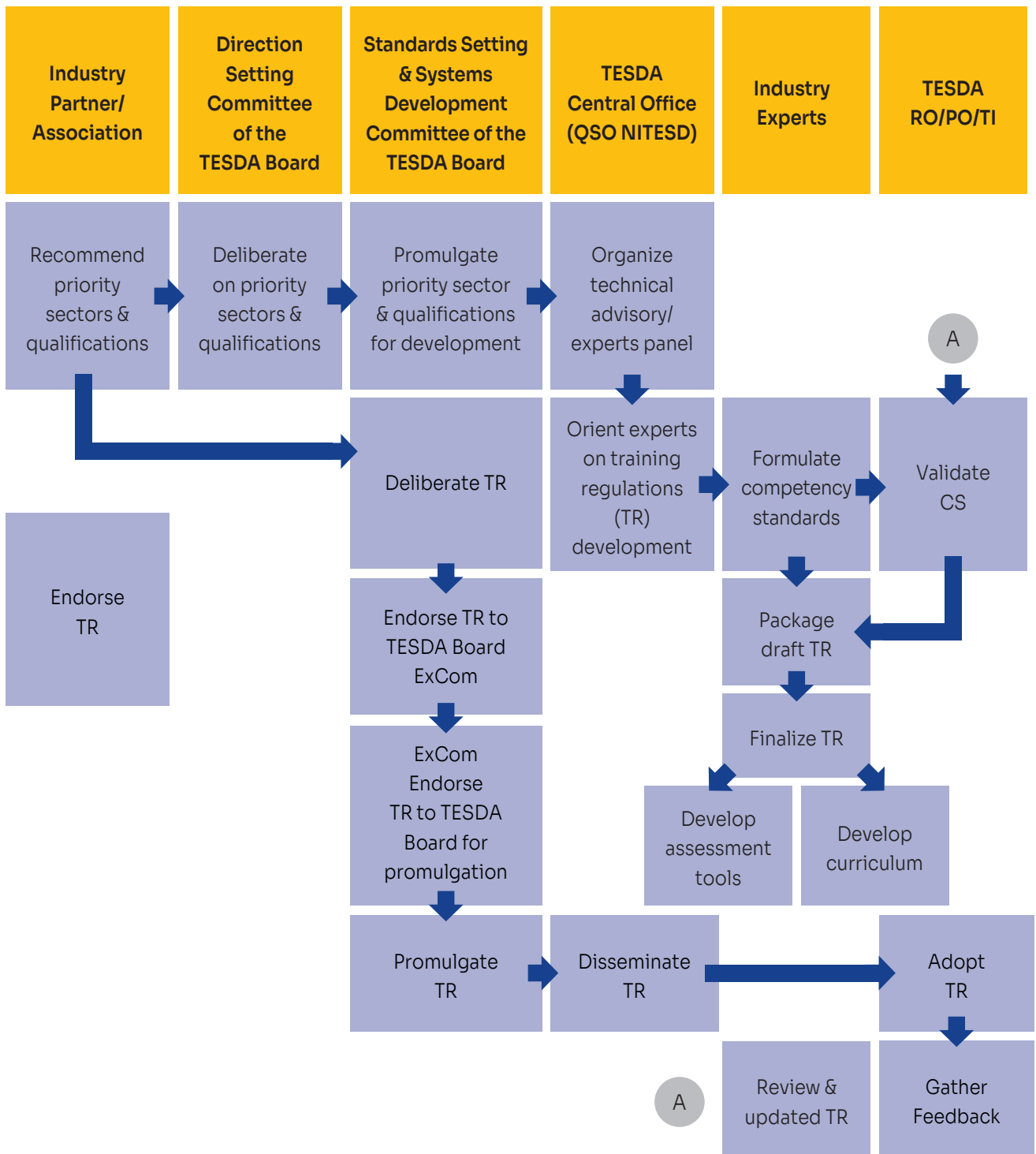
**Significant delays characterize the program registration process and the updating of TRs.** The TESDA board approves these TRs, making the process longer and sometimes unpredictable. Historically speaking, in 2022, the board only met once; and in 2023, they only met twice, once in August and the second one in December. Before they go to the board however, the TRs are reviewed by the Standards Setting and Systems Development Committee (SSSDC), which can only meet four times a month subject to the scheduling of the secretariat. If other committees in the board decide to meet and do not give way, the Standards Committee will not be able to meet and preapprove TRs. These delays not only impede the agility of TVET programs in responding to the dynamic needs of industries but also introduce inefficiencies that can be detrimental to the overall effectiveness of the TVET sector. As suggested during the consultations, TR development processes should be reformed for quicker approval and update cycles, incorporating industry expertise (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 21). Another possibility that was discussed was to recognize or accredit industry-developed TRs competency standards and to allow industry to design them as well (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 5).



The Training Regulation (TR) development process involves the following: industry partners and associations; the Direction Setting Committee of the TESDA Board; the Standards Setting and Systems Development Committee of the TESDA Board; the TESDA Central Office; industry experts; the TESDA regional and provincial offices; and their training institutes. The process starts with TESDA recommending priority sectors and qualifications; if there is no TR yet, TESDA will organize a technical advisory/experts panel, and they will formulate the competency standards, which will be validated before they are made into a TR. After that, the development of assessment tools and curriculum will start. If a TR is available, TESDA will deliberate on it and endorse it to the TESDA Board for promulgation. Once it is approved for promulgation, it will be adopted, and feedback will be gathered regarding the TR. After that, these TRs should be constantly reviewed and updated based on current needs.

*There are 40 recognized industry boards nationwide, primarily provincial, with only 6 holding national status.*

**FIGURE 5**  
**TR Development Process**



**Another challenge lies in implementing the Unified TVET Program Registration and Accreditation System (UTPRAS).** It comprises two major elements: registration and accreditation. Registration is compulsory, ensuring compliance with the minimum standards outlined in the TRs and anchored on a competency-based system. On the other hand, accreditation, a voluntary process, serves as a form of quality assurance beyond the requirements for program registration. It signifies recognition by an accrediting body that the program or institution has met specified criteria (TESDA, 1998).

The process of registering a TVET program involves a series of steps. An institution representative initiates the process by inquiring about requirements and procedures. Following an orientation by the provincial director or district UTPRAS focal person, the institution submits required documents, undergoes evaluation, and participates in an ocular inspection. The UTPRAS Inspection Team inspects tools, equipment, and facilities, preparing an inspection report. The institution may receive a Certificate of TVET Program Registration (CTPR) or a Letter of Denial, depending on compliance. The system covers all TVET programs offered by public and private institutions, including those in industrial trades, agriculture, fishery, services, and home industries. Sanctions are imposed on institutions running programs without proper registration. For schools offering new TVET programs, registration with TESDA is compulsory before accepting enrollees. This is said to be a very tedious process as the length of time it takes to get a CTPR varies (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 4).

### **Streamlining TR Development Processes**

**In response to EDCOM II consultations, TR development processes are being reformed for faster approval and updates, integrating industry expertise.** TESDA is implementing the adopt-adapt strategy, expediting competency standards through methods such as benchmarking, procurement, and immersion. Additionally, TESDA is collaborating with industry TVET boards to address industry requirements in standards development.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Process of Registering a TVET Program**

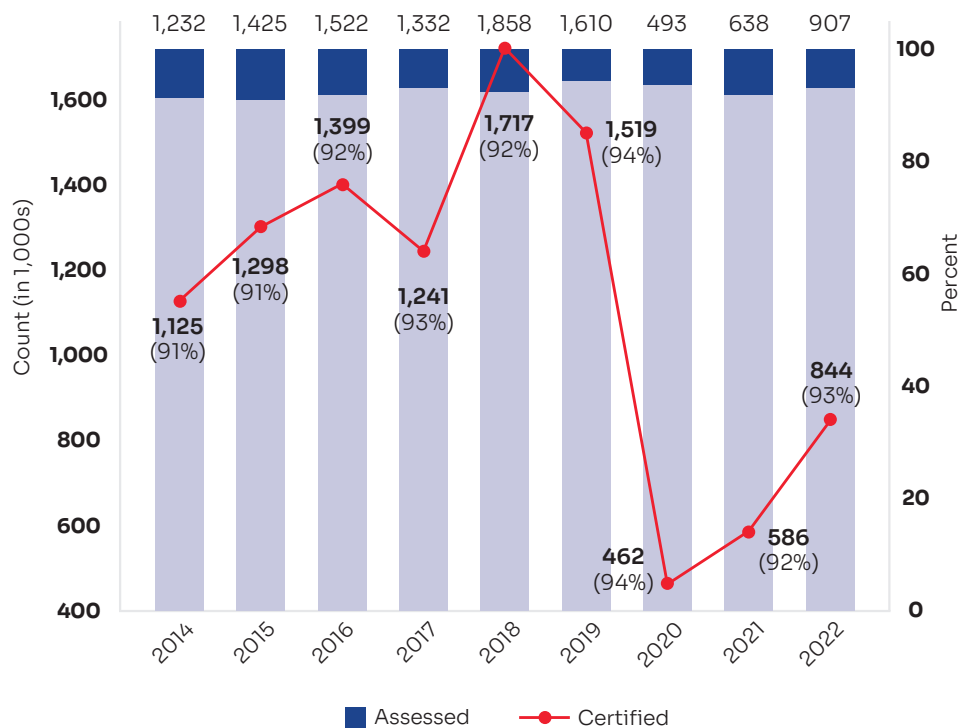


The operational procedures outlined in UTPRAS prescribe a specific set of milestones, requirements, and controls, leaving little room for innovation to address local relevance. These guidelines are deployed for implementation by provincial and regional offices, leading to varying interpretations in some cases. For instance, there is a notable disparity in the treatment of a heavy equipment operations program using a training program from a global company that complies with TESDA competency standards. While the program was allowed for registration in Region IV-A, it faced disapproval in Region X. Region X insisted on curriculum modifications, necessitating adjustments to the training materials already integrated into the digital learning resources used globally by the company. **This situation underscores the need for a thorough assessment of the capability of TESDA regional and provincial offices, along with their R/PTESDCs, to make informed judgments on industry submissions at the area-based level.**

In terms of assessment and certification, data shows that the majority of community-based training (CBT) programs have the second highest number of enrollees (39%) among the various TESDA training modalities (TESDA Information and Communication Technology Office [ICTO], 2023). However, it should be noted that these CBT programs are not assessed as they are only given a certificate of training after they have undergone the program, because they are not designed according to applicable training regulations. Between 2014 and 2022, the number of TVET graduates that did not get assessed refers to more than 11 million trainees. Section 3 of each TR provides guidance for training program curriculum and curricular requirements for the formal mode of training delivery and would not apply to other modes of training programs such as CBT and apprenticeship.

Adding to the complexity, certain programs fall under the umbrella of TRs, implying that individuals can pursue full qualification and subsequently undergo assessment and certification. This model is exemplified by TESDA’s Skills Training and Employment Program (STEP). This program, aligned with TRs, provides a pathway for individuals to acquire full qualifications and undergo the necessary assessments for certification.

**FIGURE 7**  
**Number of TVET Graduates Assessed and Certified, 2014–2022**



Source: 2014-2022 TESDA Annual Report



**However, the effectiveness of different certification levels in delivering tangible socioeconomic benefits must be evaluated, and targeted interventions are needed to enhance the socioeconomic impact of TVET across diverse demographic backgrounds.** This imperative arises from a closer examination of the National Certificate completion levels that presents an intriguing yet concerning pattern.

The data indicate that a significant majority (64%) of programs with training regulations focus on lower-skill levels, specifically NC I and NC II. TESDA's information further reveals that only 35% of training regulations are dedicated to higher-skill levels, specifically NCs III and IV. Additionally, the majority of registered programs fall under NC II (56%). It is noteworthy that there is a limited availability of training regulations for NC IV (7%), and there are no training regulations for NC V. In essence, the current distribution of training programs seems to be skewed toward lower-skill levels, with a notable lack of emphasis on higher-skill levels, particularly NC IV and NC V.

This is concerning, especially when considering the significant impact on income improvement associated with the completion of NCs III and IV. The analysis of income levels among TVET graduates reveals a lack of significant differences in income before and after training. Interestingly, lower-educated graduates experienced the most substantial benefits upon completing NC III and NC IV, with elementary graduates witnessing an impressive 96.9% increase in income, and secondary graduates experiencing a notable 26.9% increase. However, completing a Certificate of Competency (COC) or NCs I to II did not yield similar income improvements for graduates, raising questions about the value of lower-level certifications based on TESDA data in 2021. It is noteworthy that most graduates likely to earn minimum wage were already in that income bracket before training. Surprisingly, graduates with at least a college-level education, whether with "no certification" or having completed "NC II," even suffered income declines after training. These findings highlight the complex relationship between TVET training levels, educational backgrounds, and post-training income outcomes, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach in designing and implementing vocational training programs.



*“Enable additional modes of engagement for industry-led training and upskilling (clarification on need for industry trainers to take training methodology).”*

—IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP)

**TABLE 4**  
**EDCOM Computations Based on TESDA 2021 SETG**

	Model
<b>NC Level</b> (Reference: No certification)	
NC I and lower	0.0474
NC II	-0.416
NC III-IV	0.969***
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b> (Reference: Elementary and lower)	
Secondary	-0.00957
<b>College level or higher</b>	<b>0.463***</b>
<b>Interaction between NC Level and Education</b> (Reference: No certification # Elementary and lower)	
NC I and lower # Secondary and lower	0.0397
NC I and lower # College level or higher	-0.124
NC II # Secondary and lower	0.482
NC II # College level or higher	0.424
NC III-IV # Secondary and lower	<b>-0.702***</b>
NC III-IV # College level or higher	<b>-0.993***</b>
<b>Type of Employment (After Training)</b> (Reference: Nonwage workers)	
<b>Wage workers</b>	<b>0.253***</b>
<b>Experience</b>	0.00701
<b>Experience # Experience</b>	-7.39
<b>Sex</b> (Reference: Female)	
<b>Male</b>	<b>0.362***</b>
<b>Observations (n)</b>	2,785
<b>R-Squared</b>	0.193

Note. \*The model also controlled for regional variation: NCR (+60.6%) and Region IV (+22.5%) were statistically significant relative to Region I.

*It was identified that there is a need for an additional 11,838 competency assessors to facilitate the assessment and certification of students enrolled in the SHS TVL track. This gap affects the recognition and validation of skills acquired through TVET programs, hindering the mobility and recognition of individuals within the workforce.*

**A more robust and thorough data collection mechanism is indispensable in providing accurate insights into the employment outcomes of TVET graduates, enabling evidence-based policy decisions and strategic improvements in the TVET sector.** The data presented in Table 4 is derived from TESDA's Study on the Employment of TVET Graduates (SETG), an annual survey of graduates of With Training Regulations programs that uses self-reports from the respondents (TESDA Planning Office, 2022). However, it is important to note that the data collection process for the SETG is identified as inadequate in terms of comprehensiveness.

**In addition to the income-related findings, the TVET sector grapples with a limited pool of instructors with the necessary certification to effectively deliver EBT programs, leading to different NCs (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 3–4).** While there is a specific TR for industry-based trainers (TESDA, 2018b), the appreciation of industry for using this as an incentive for EBT is not evident. The need for more qualified instructors is a significant bottleneck, hindering the seamless and effective delivery of quality training. During the consultations, it was noted that some instructors and trainers from TVIs have been pirated by public technical training institutes and public senior high schools offering the technical-vocational-livelihood (TVL) track (EDCOM II, 2023). Addressing this challenge necessitates a strategic and sustained effort to enhance the certification process for instructors, thereby ensuring a competent cadre of educators capable of imparting the skills demanded by evolving industries.

Furthermore, identifying areas where some NCs cannot be assessed due to a lack of assessors points to a critical gap in the assessment infrastructure (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 3–4). It was identified that there is a need for an additional 11,838 competency assessors to facilitate the assessment and certification of students enrolled in the SHS TVL track. This gap affects the recognition and validation of skills acquired through TVET programs, hindering the mobility and recognition of individuals within the workforce.

**The persistence of outdated machinery requirements specified in TRs adds another layer of complexity, underscoring the need for dynamic and responsive mechanisms to update and align TRs with contemporary industry standards.**

**The lack of comprehensive trainee support systems underscores the need for transparency in the allocation of national, regional, and provincial scholarships.** This issue contributes to the perpetuation of socioeconomic barriers among students, as highlighted by Tubio (2021). Ensuring equitable distribution based on the school's accreditation level, capability, and absorptive capacity is crucial for fostering inclusivity and equal access (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 20).

**Existing free programs are impeded by persistent financial constraints, particularly concerning the provision of adequate food.** The allowances allocated to students, instead of being directed toward crucial training needs, frequently become essential for meeting basic nutritional requirements. Overcoming these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach that not only offers financial support but also takes into account the broader socioeconomic context of the learners.

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## Recommendations

**Improve data collection processes for a more efficient trainee tracing system within the TVET sector.** Employing robust data collection mechanisms, potentially incorporating advanced analytics and tracking technologies, would yield accurate insights into the employment outcomes and career paths of TVET graduates. This data-driven approach supports evidence-based decision-making, enabling targeted interventions to address challenges faced by graduates.



# DON BOSCO

*“Institutions like Don Bosco Youth Center are almost always in a constant struggle for financial sustainability. This is why we look to our partners to survive and continue giving out-of-school youth opportunities to grow and reach their potential.”*

—Fr. Dennis Sylvester Casclang, SDB

*Streamlining administrative processes, rationalizing EBT programs, enhancing data collection, and increasing funding and scholarship opportunities constitute integral steps toward creating a more responsive, inclusive, and impactful TVET system.*

**Align the student SETG data with the Labor Force Survey (LFS) for seamless tracing.** Additionally, refining the wording of questions related to educational attainment and incorporating Philippine Standard Occupational Classification (PSOC) codes in data collection is recommended to enhance analysis and ease the tracing of TESDA program takers.

According to TESDA, there are ongoing discussions with PSA to better align data collection to accurately capture TVET in the LFS.

**TESDA should have a centralized management information system (MIS) that traces the creation, delivery, and lifespan of all TESDA programs and a similar version for trainees.** Collaboration with the Department of Information and Communications Technology should be explored, as they help agencies with their cloud-based platforms that can house the MIS.

**Increase funding for training programs and expanding scholarship opportunities to cater to more learners in need.** Adequate funding is fundamental for overcoming financial barriers that often hinder access to quality vocational training. Expanding scholarship programs ensures individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have equitable opportunities to pursue TVET, fostering inclusivity and diversity within the skilled workforce (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 3–4). This recommendation aligns with the broader goal of democratizing education and skill development access, contributing to social and economic mobility. Another recommendation that was discussed was to allow trainees to have multiple sources of funding to augment their financial needs. A review of the responsiveness and adequacy

of current scholarship policies in relation to the needs of TVET learners should be done. Likewise, the utilization of existing TVIs operating in the area with assistance in upgrading its resources and training facilities will enhance access to quality training and complementarity.

**Initiate a paradigm shift toward an industry-driven incentive framework to foster a more conducive environment for industry participation.** This involves actively involving industries in designing and implementing incentive programs to ensure that these initiatives align with their needs and encourage active engagement. Additionally, advocating for increased government funding and developing a comprehensive strategy to gain industry “buy-in” are essential components of a holistic solution.

Streamlining administrative processes, rationalizing EBT programs, enhancing data collection, and increasing funding and scholarship opportunities constitute integral steps toward creating a more responsive, inclusive, and impactful TVET system. Implementing these measures requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, educational and training institutions, and industry stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of a concerted approach to advancing the landscape of vocational education and training.

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## Next Steps for Year 2

**The Commission will undertake initiatives to enhance TVET effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability by scrutinizing EBT incentives, reviewing lifelong learning frameworks, exploring global sustainability models, and fast-tracking the review of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF).**

A crucial next step involves close collaboration with the Bureau of Internal Revenue and TESDA to scrutinize the utilization of EBT incentives. This joint effort aims to ensure transparency and efficiency in the distribution of incentives, fostering an environment conducive for industries to actively engage in EBT programs.



The Commission will likewise review lifelong learning in the Philippines using the International Labor Organization's analytical framework. Simultaneously, a series of workshops will be conducted to develop a framework for lifelong learning.

Inspired by successful global models, particularly the levy systems in Korea and the United Kingdom, the Commission plans to thoroughly examine and draw relevant aspects for application in enhancing TVET sustainability in the Philippines.

A critical agenda item for the second year involves fast-tracking the review of the PQF levels and descriptors. As the backbone of the TVET system, the PQF provides a standardized framework for recognizing qualifications, ensuring that TVET graduates are equipped with skills relevant to contemporary job requirements (Villanueva, 2017). Accelerating the review process is integral to maintaining the PQF's dynamism and responsiveness to the evolving demands of industries. A series of workshops starting in the second quarter of 2024 will help address this issue.



Republic of the Philippines  
**TESDA**  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



## GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

# Decentralization and Participation: Meeting the Challenges of Governance and Finance in Philippine Education

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**The First Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM I) attributed issues of access and deteriorating education quality to 2 principal causes: the country's underinvestment in education and poor management of the education bureaucracy.** To address the problem of underinvestment, EDCOM I pushed for the commitment of the national and local governments to prioritize the financing of education, as well as the exploration of alternative strategies to generate resources for education. Since then, the country has seen robust growth in both public and private sector spending for education (Abrigo, 2021; Tenazas, 2022). As for the problem of poor management, EDCOM I put forward the recommendation to restructure and decentralize the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) to enable focused management and promote operational efficiency. These recommendations led to the establishment of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as autonomous agencies from DECS in the 1990s through Republic Act (RA) Nos. 7796

and 7722, respectively. DECS was also reorganized into the Department of Education (DepEd) through RA 9155, which distinguished the authorities and accountabilities of the central office and field units under the principle of shared governance.

**While these reforms led to subsector expansion and notable gains in enhancing education accessibility, trifocalization created challenges in sector management and coordination, particularly due to the absence of a permanent coordinating body aligned with EDCOM I goals** (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2021). Moreover, despite high enrollment rates and robust growth in both public and private sector spending in education, the issue of deteriorating quality has persisted. As for DepEd, in many respects, the agency continues to be a highly centralized bureaucracy. Moreover, years of centralized governance have fostered an extremely hierarchical culture wherein “no policy or practice in the lower levels of the hierarchy may change or take place unless there is an explicit DepEd memo from the Central Office that allows it” (Bautista et al., 2010, p. 59). This diminishes the subsector’s capacity for innovation and slows responsiveness to actual needs and problems. Moreover, this also limits the meaningful participation of stakeholders and weakens the relationships of accountability that could promote effective and efficient use of both public and private resources and incentivize the behaviors of learners, parents, and other local actors toward attaining desired learning outcomes (Baum et al., 2014).

*Years of centralized governance have fostered an extremely hierarchical culture wherein “no policy or practice in the lower levels of the hierarchy may change or take place unless there is an explicit DepEd memo from the Central Office that allows it.”*

— (Bautista et al., 2010, p. 59)

To gain a deeper understanding of the structural and systemic issues underlying our education system's governance and finance challenges, the Standing Committee on Governance and Finance conducted literature reviews and desk research and organized various consultations with stakeholders from national agencies, local governments, and schools. Findings from these activities are summarized in succeeding sections organized by priority area.

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## Priority Area 23: Seamless and integrated delivery of education

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Issue: Organizational capacity and coordination challenges faced by DepEd, CHED, and TESDA, which include insufficient staffing levels—given their expanding responsibilities—and a historical, persistent lack of effective coordination mechanisms, have significantly impinged on the quality and efficiency of education services.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

**The education sector suffers from a lack of a coherent plan, road map, or vision, hindering its ability to strategically navigate and address the challenges posed by extensive reforms and increased responsibilities.**

In the past 3 decades, key reforms in the education sector have expanded the mandates of DepEd, CHED, and TESDA. In the case of DepEd, the addition of Kindergarten and Grades 11 and 12 as part of the K to 12 curricular reform translated to additional classrooms, teachers, learning resources, assessments, teacher training, and learner support programs. Meanwhile, various laws and programs have opened up new scholarship and subsidy programs in both higher and technical-vocational education, thus expanding the responsibilities of both TESDA and CHED. These reforms have been accompanied by increases in the budget allocation for the 3 agencies. In

view of these developments, one of the key questions being explored under this issue is whether or not the existing education bureaucracy has the organizational capacity needed to accomplish its respective mandates.

Through desk research and focus group discussion with technical-level staff of the agencies, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) found that the staffing complement of TESDA and CHED has remained lean despite the expansion of their mandates and growth in their budgets (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6). As an illustration, analysis of figures indicated in the General Appropriations Act shows that CHED's budget has significantly increased by 633% within 10 years, from Php 4.1B in 2013 to Php 30.89B in 2023. Meanwhile, plantilla positions have only increased by 22.7%, from 543 in 2013 to 666 in 2023, based on data submitted by CHED (2023a). Relative to CHED, TESDA has fared better, with a 40.8% increase in staffing, from 1,883 to 2,652 positions (TESDA, 2023c).

*“The staffing complement of TESDA and CHED has remained lean despite the expansion of their mandates and growth in their budgets.”*

— (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6)



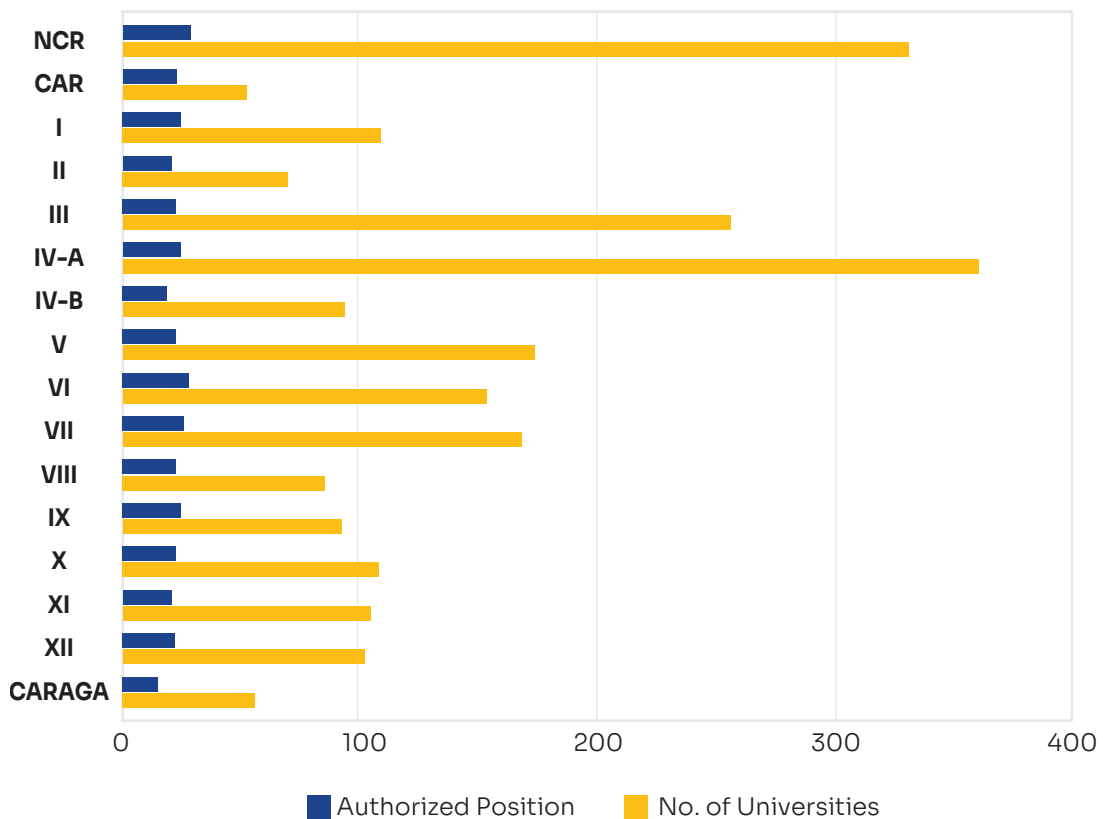


*The number of plantilla personnel for the regional offices is more or less the same, regardless of the number of universities that they need to cater to in their region.*



However, the situation in the field units is worse. CHED’s regional offices have not been allocated any additional plantilla items since the agency’s rationalization in 2013. At present, each regional office has only 20 to 28 regular personnel who perform multiple functions across different programs and projects that are simultaneously implemented. As illustrated in Figure 1, the number of plantilla personnel for the regional offices is more or less the same, regardless of the number of universities that they need to cater to in their region. This inequity in the distribution of personnel is most evident in Region IV-A, the National Capital Region (NCR), and Region III.

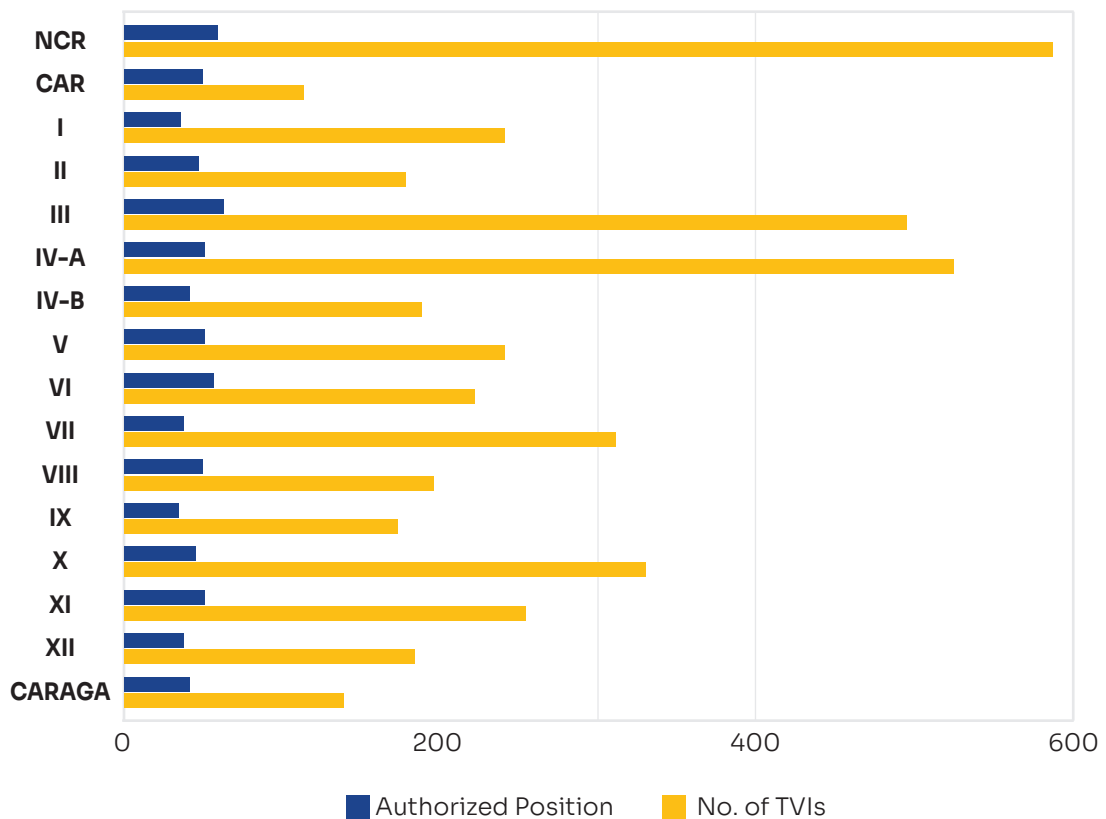
**FIGURE 1**  
**Distribution of Authorized Positions (Plantilla) vis-a-vis the Number of Universities per Region**



Note: Data obtained from CHED’s submission of total staff complement as of September 2023.

Relative to CHED, the regional offices of TESDA appear to be better staffed with a range of 50 to 64 regular positions. However, the staff complement of the agency’s 76 provincial offices is quite lean, with only 7 to 12 regular positions. Figure 2 shows that similar to the situation in CHED, the number of regular personnel in TESDA provincial offices does not change proportional to the number of clientele they serve, represented in terms of the number of technical-vocational institutions (TVIs). These provincial offices provide key services such as regulation, technical-vocational education and training (TVET) program registration and accreditation, as well as competency assessment and certification of skilled workers.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Distribution of Authorized Positions (Plantilla) vis-a-vis the Number of TVIs per Region**



Note: Data obtained from TESDA’s submission of staffing complement of provincial offices.

To cope, the agencies have resorted to hiring more contract of service/job order personnel (COS/JO). As of September 2023, CHED had 752 COS/JO personnel, exceeding the 666 authorized positions in its plantilla (CHED, 2023b). On the other hand, TESDA has engaged the services of 673 COS/JO, augmenting 767 authorized positions in the agency's provincial offices (TESDA, 2023b). The fact that the number of COS/JO personnel in CHED exceeds its authorized plantilla, and is almost half of TESDA's regular staff in the field is a cause for concern because the hiring of COS/JO personnel has drawbacks. For one, COS/JO salaries are charged against maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) instead of personnel services, which decreases the operational budget for other critical activities. More importantly, COS/JO personnel cannot be assigned sensitive tasks in operations and be held accountable (TESDA, 2023c). Thus, signatories who are plantilla holders become bottlenecks in processing, such as in the release of allowances to students and tuition payments to higher education institutes. Some personnel who are holding plantilla positions also maintain double functions, while critical tasks are being assigned to ad hoc teams, all of which are contributing to delays and issues in the quality of service delivered to stakeholders.

In contrast to CHED and TESDA, DepEd maintains quite a large workforce with a total authorized plantilla of 1,025,823, great majority of these are teaching positions (86.7%), while the remaining are teaching-related (6.3%) and nonteaching positions (7.1%) (DepEd, 2023d). However, consultations with teachers and school heads reveal uneven allocation of support staff across schools (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 26; 2023, Jul 28). For instance, in one focus group discussion with 6 school heads coming from 2 separate school divisions, EDCOM II found a wide variation in the school's support staff:

- Of the 3 elementary schools that were represented, 2 schools had 1 Administrative Officer (AO) II each, while the third one had 0 nonteaching staff.
- Of the 3 secondary schools that were represented, one had 2 Administrative Assistant (ADAS) II staff, while another had 2 ADAS III and 2 ADAS II. The third school had a total of 36 nonteaching staff, which included 1 AO IV, 1 AO II, a cashier, and a bookkeeper.

These reported figures suggest that some of the parameters for support staff positions in schools determined by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) in 1997 have not been adequately satisfied. The parameters indicate that 1 AO I position should be provided to every secondary school; and yet based on the feedback provided by the school heads, only 1 school had an AO in its plantilla. Probing this further through analysis of aggregate plantilla figures submitted by DepEd (2023d) suggests that there are deficits in school support staff positions when compared against the standards provided under the Organization and Staffing Standards for DECS Schools Divisions, Elementary and Secondary Schools issued by the DBM. Using the parameters of 1 AO I position for every secondary school and 1 AO II position for every 400 secondary students, it was found that:

- There is a deficit of at least 9,809 AO I positions, given that there were 10,686 secondary schools in SY 2022–2023 and only 877 AO I authorized positions.
- There is a deficit of at least 6,151 AO II positions, given 5,905 secondary schools in SY 2022–2023 with at least 400 learners enrolled and 16,406 AO II positions in the agency’s plantilla.

It is also worth noting that these numbers likely underestimate the actual deficits since the aggregate number of authorized positions were used in the computation, which would inadvertently include positions that are also deployed in higher governance levels such as the division and regional offices. Furthermore, other support staff are specified in the DBM standards, but analysis was limited to these positions as the other parameters are based on the number of teachers per school. Such information is expected to become more readily available for system-level analysis with DepEd’s adoption of the electronic School Form 7 in SY 2023–2024 (DepEd, 2023e), and further analysis should be conducted to understand the extent of the shortage of support staff in schools, and to identify where such positions should be allocated.

Reflecting on the felt need for support staff in their schools, 2 school heads shared the following remarks:

*“For small schools, we don’t have any nonteaching personnel. We could not ask for an AO because there’s no item for it. The problem would be most teachers would handle ancillary tasks, so they would work on it after their classes, just so they could work on the reports that are needed ASAP.”*

*“For schools that don’t have ADAS, or administrative assistant, our work to provide technical assistance to the teachers will not suffice because our time will go to the administrative processes, especially in looking for saan naipit yung mga receipts, are the procured items delivered well, ano yung mga reimbursements, and so on. Our work should be 70–30, 70 for instructional leadership, like giving technical assistance, and 30 should be for our administrative work. But what happens is that a lot of our time is spent on liquidation because if our name comes out that we are not liquidated for that specific quarter, then it reflects badly on us. We are not that good of a school head pala kasi meron kaming financial na kakulangan. Kahit 1 peso or 0.02 centavo, we need to return it . . . Talagang nahihirapan ako when it comes to liquidation. Talagang nakukuha ang time ko doon lalo na kung may kulang ka na isang signature tapos absent yung lahat ng BAC [Bids and Awards committee].”*

In view of the direct impact of teacher and school head workloads on the quality of the teaching-learning process, there is an urgent need to review the allocation of support staff in schools. This is particularly relevant given that even as the agency’s mandate expanded with the implementation of the K to 12 reform, the school-level structure and staffing were excluded from the organizational review efforts conducted between 2011 and 2015 as part of the review and revision of the agency’s Rationalization Plan (DepEd, 2015b; EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6). In this regard, the review of school organizational structure and staffing being undertaken by DepEd is a step in the right direction.



**The historical context of the Philippines’s trifocalized education system reveals a lack of effective coordination among education agencies toward agreed-upon goals.**

Barely a decade after the trifocalization of the education system, there was already a clamor for greater intersectoral and intrasectoral coordination (Manasan, 2000). The Philippine Education Sector Study (PESS), jointly conducted in 1998 by the ADB and the World Bank, observed that in the absence of an effective coordinating mechanism between the 3 education agencies, “trifocalization made it difficult to formulate sector-wide policies and to make decisions on the allocation of sector resources” (as cited in ADB, 2021, p. 105). Subsequent reviews initiated by the national government and development partners have made similar observations. The Philippine Commission on Education Reform (PCER), which built on the work of EDCOM I, pointed to “possible overlaps and gaps as well as inconsistencies in and non-alignment of policies, plans, and programs” (as cited in Executive Order (EO) No. 273, s. 2000). In its review of progress since the 1998 PESS report, the World Bank continued to observe that “the current lack of an integrated leadership in the education sector cripples the ability of the policymakers to act strategically across the sub-sectors” (2004, p. 17).

In recent years, there has been a renewed push for enhanced coordination and effective governance within the education sector, prompted by a recognized need for improvements in the implementation of the K to 12 program. Former DepEd secretary and CHED commissioner Mona Valisno has called for closer coordination and synchronization of activities (Mateo, 2016), while the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) has pointed to the need for harmonization of curricula and achievement levels across subsectors (PCCI Education Task Force, 2022). Research on teacher quality has also underscored the importance of a holistic approach between the teacher education agencies to meet the demand for teacher quality in view of the present learning crisis (Generalao et al., 2022). Furthermore, in anticipation of the rapid transformations ushered in by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, scholars have also emphasized the importance of an education system that enables flexibility and modularity (Dadios et al., 2018). In this context, the operationalization of a well-functioning qualifications framework and a well-articulated credit transfer system would be critical, which further emphasizes the need for a well-coordinated education system (ADB, 2021; World Bank, 2021).



**Efforts to put in place a mechanism for coordination have been ongoing since the early recognition of the need for sectoral coordination and cohesion under a trifocalized regime, dating back to EDCOM I.** To mitigate the risk of nonalignment between the education subsectors, EDCOM I proposed the creation of a national council for education that would “maintain system integration and program unity at the highest level of the education system” (ADB, 2021, p. 104). It took almost a decade after EDCOM I before this was acted upon. Following the reiteration of the PCER of EDCOM I’s proposal to establish a mechanism for transsubsector coordination, EO 273 was issued in 2000, creating the National Coordinating Council for Education (NCCE). However, the NCCE “moved in spurts and did not quite succeed in addressing its expected roles” (Soliven, 2008, par. 7).

The impediments to the NCCE’s effective operation are twofold. First, the designation of the 3 education agencies as equal partners sharing leadership of the NCCE on a rotational basis was deemed incongruent with the hierarchical nature of Philippine government entities (Cruz, 2007). Second, the absence of a strong policy instrument that could enforce harmonization made it dependent on the goodwill and discretion of the agency heads or the president. At the inception of the NCCE, the lack of value for transsubsector coordination was apparent, as it was “the first rotating chair’s view that formally convening the coordinating body and constituting the prescribed high-powered secretariat were not priorities” (ADB, 2021, p. 105). Thus, coordination between the agencies “remained informal, with issues being resolved on an ad hoc basis and no deliberate sector-wide decisions being made” (ADB, 2021, p. 107).

Seven years after its creation, the NCCE was abolished through EO 632, citing opposition from DepEd and CHED against TESDA’s assumption of the NCCE chairmanship. It was replaced by the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Education (OPAE), which was subsumed under the Presidential Task Force for Education (PTFE) through EO 652 issued just a month later. The OPAE and the PTFE led to the issuance of 10 executive orders on education as well as the conduct of a biennial national congress. However, the OPAE and the PTFE also proved to be short-lived and were “ineffective in harmonizing policies, programs, and reform initiatives of the three co-equal education agencies given the ad hoc nature of its creation” (Buendia et al., 2011, p. 10).



### **Is a return to a centralized structure the answer to effective coordination?**

In view of the felt need for closer collaboration between the education agencies, there have been calls to remerge the agencies to “streamline the bureaucracy and reduce significantly the government’s overhead on spending for various agencies that have fragmented initiatives on education” (Valisno, 2012, as cited in Mateo, 2016, par. 15). However, it bears noting that, owing to a population boom in the last half century and sustained public investment to increase access to education, there has been a considerable growth in the complexity and scale of our education system since EDCOM I. A comparison of the enrollment and number of educational institutions between the periods 1990–1991 and 2022–2023 is shown in Figures 3 and 4.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Comparison of Enrollment per Subsector**  
**(SY 1990–1991 and SY 2022–2023)**

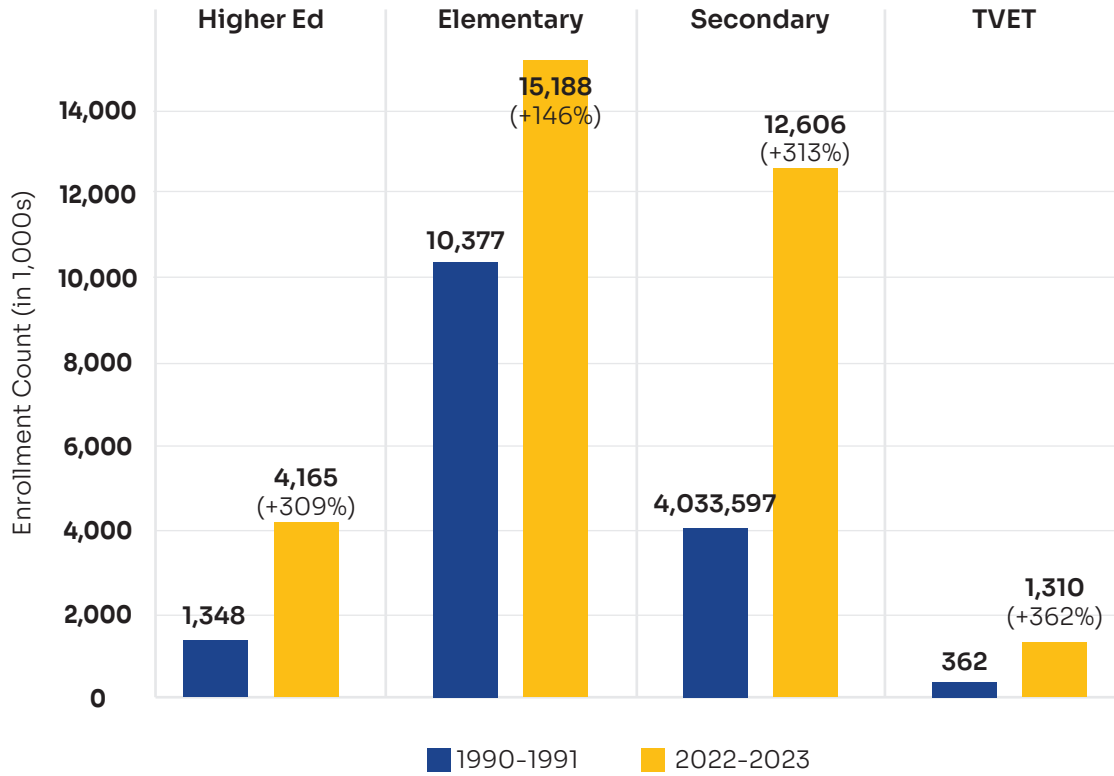
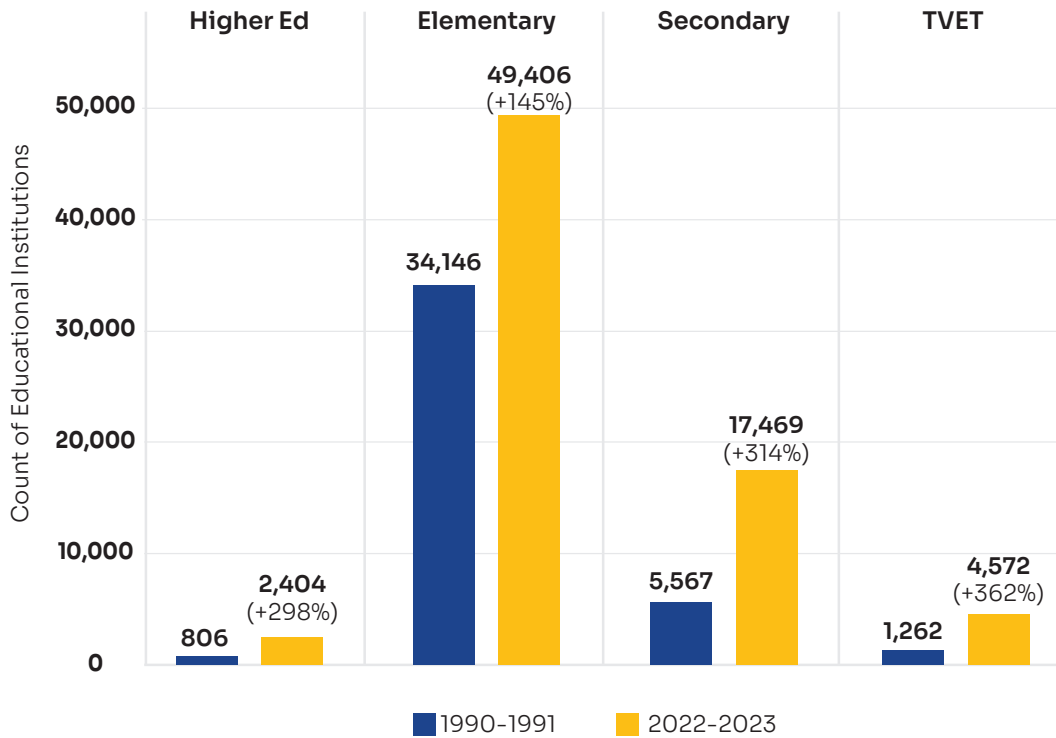


Figure 3 shows a 46.4% increase in enrollment at the elementary level and even more significant increases in the secondary, tertiary, and TVET, which have increased to more than thrice the number of learners in 1990–1991. A similar pattern can be observed in the number of educational institutions that have been established, with the total numbers rising from 41,781 during EDCOM I to the present-day number of 73,851. This is hardly surprising given the country’s efforts to improve access to education services, such as the institutionalization of Kindergarten as part of basic education through RA 10157, the expansion of secondary education to include Grades 11 and 12 through RA 10533, and the provision of funds to facilitate access to TVET through RA 11230, among many other legislative initiatives.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Comparison of Educational Institutions per Subsector (SY 1990–1991 and SY 2022–2023)**



*Note: Data consolidated from EDCOM I Tables and Figures, DepEd Learner Information System as of January 10, 2023, TESDA Training Management Information System dashboard, and CHED FY 2024 budget presentation. Figures for higher education include satellite campuses.*

Similar increases in scale were also experienced by our near neighbors Malaysia and Thailand, which created pressure for more efficient and effective management of the different segments of their education systems (Varghese, 2009; Sirat & Wan, 2022; Pimpa, 2011). This has been compounded by a felt need to cope with advances in information and technology and create an enabling environment for developing research and innovation capacity as both countries seek to foster knowledge-based economies. These pressures led Malaysia to establish separate ministries responsible for basic and higher education in 2003 (Varghese, 2009). Thailand did the same in 2019; but interestingly, its ministry responsible for higher education is also tasked with overseeing agencies specializing in science, research, and innovation (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2020).

*The experiences of our near neighbors and the present scale of our education system suggest that the return to a highly centralized structure to address coordination challenges under the trifocalized system may not be responsive to contemporary trends and challenges.*

The experiences of our near neighbors and the present scale of our education system suggest that the return to a highly centralized structure to address coordination challenges under the trifocalized system may not be responsive to contemporary trends and challenges. The information processing capacity alone required to manage a complex system like education would require the mobilization of significant resources to enable decision-making from a highly centralized bureaucracy (Burns & Köster, 2016). Instead, such resources may be used to strengthen institutional arrangements and the networks of actors nearer to where learning delivery takes place.

**Collaboration in the absence of a national coordinating body was assessed by the Commission through the solicitation of submissions and the conduct of a focus group discussion with technical-level staff from DepEd, TESDA, and CHED.** The findings, based on these submissions and desk research, led the technical secretariat to compile a list of 68 interagency bodies created through legislation, agency issuances, and agreements. Through a focus group discussion (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6), it was found that these mechanisms have limited effectiveness for the following reasons:

1. The scope is either too specific or too broad. Some interagency committees have a very narrow focus, such as the Interagency Committee on Economic and Financial Literacy, convened in line with RA 10922. This does not foster the systems perspective needed to orchestrate the sector as a whole. On the other hand, the cabinet

clusters under which education concerns have been lodged cover a broad scope of concerns, incompatible with the focused attention needed to ensure alignment. In the case of the Social Development Committee (SDC), a cabinet-level interagency body created by EO 230, s. 1987, education is only one among other critical concerns such as workforce, health and nutrition, population and family planning, housing, human settlements, and the delivery of other social services. The SDC Secretariat circulates draft strategic plans among member agencies for input to manage the agenda. While this enables the sharing of feedback on high-level details, there is no assurance that such feedback will be adopted. Without ample opportunity for in-depth discussion on potentially conflicting directions, strategies, and implementation arrangements, a common agenda for education does not arise through the SDC.

2. There is weak institutional arrangements and capacity. Irregularity of meetings and lack of continuity were commonly cited issues in coordinating DepEd, CHED, and TESDA. In the case of the Philippine Qualifications Framework–National Coordinating Council (PQF–NCC) and working groups, TESDA continues to function as interim secretariat 5 years after the promulgation of RA 10968. While Section 10 of the law mandates the establishment of a permanent secretariat, the absence of specific rules on staff complement and budget has led to delays in its constitution (World Bank, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of a coordinated financing plan and comprehensive strategic plan exacerbates delays in fully operationalizing the PQF–NCC.

As for the collaborative process that the education agencies engage in to formulate the Philippine Development Plan, this should provide ample opportunity for alignment in theory. However, feedback from the focus group discussion with technical staff from DepEd, CHED, and TESDA reveals varying levels of commitment to the development planning process among agency executives. One agency, in particular, was constrained by the “indifference or lack of commitment displayed by the [agency’s] higher-ups” (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6). This lack of commitment is left unchecked in the absence of measures that could exact accountability for poor outcomes.

**TABLE 1****National-Level Coordinative Mechanisms**

*Note: The coordinative mechanisms below were identified through agency submissions (only TESDA has submitted thus far), Annex B of DepEd Order No. 1, s. 2023, and DepEd Office Order OO-OSEC-2022-060. Since DepEd and CHED have not yet submitted their respective inventories, it is best to treat this inventory as partial rather than exhaustive. Involvement of the agencies was cross-referenced against the legal and/or policy instrument that established the coordinative body.*

National-Level Coordinative Mechanisms	Legal Basis	DepEd	CHED	TESDA
NEDA - Social Development Committee	EO 230, s. 1987	✓	✓	✓
Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster	EO 43, s. 2011 EO 24, s. 2017	✓	✓	✓
Commission on Population-Board of Commissioners	PD 79, s. 1972	✓		
National Youth Commission-Advisory Council	RA 8044	✓		
National Commission for Culture and the Arts	RA 7356	✓		
National Anti-Poverty Commission	RA 8425	✓		
Human Rights Violations Victims' Memorial Commission	RA 10368	✓	✓	
Philippine Qualifications Framework-National Coordinating Council and Working Groups	RA 10968	✓	✓	✓
Teacher Education Council	RA 11713	✓	✓	✓
National Nutrition Council	PD 491, s. 1974	✓		
Council for the Welfare of Children	PD 603, s. 1974 EO 233, s. 1987	✓		
Interagency Council for Children in Situations of Armed Conflict	EO 138, s. 2013	✓		
Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council	RA 9344	✓		
National Innovation Council	RA 11293	✓	✓	
Interagency Council for Development and Competitiveness of Philippine Digital Workforce	RA 11927	✓	✓	✓
Philippine Council for Mental Health	RA 11036	✓	✓	
Philippine National AIDS Council	EO 39, s. 1992	✓		
Film Development Council of the Philippines	RA 9167	✓		
Council of Good Local Governance	RA 11292	✓		
COMELEC Advisory Council	RA 9369	✓		
Design Advisory Council	RA 10577	✓	✓	

National-Level Coordinative Mechanisms	Legal Basis	DepEd	CHED	TESDA
National Dairy Authority	RA 7884	✓		
United Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Board	RA 10687	✓	✓	✓
National Book Development Board	RA 8047	✓	✓	✓
TESDA Board	RA 7796	✓		✓
Philippine Statistics Authority Board	RA 10625	✓	✓	✓
Dangerous Drugs Board	RA 9165	✓	✓	
National Council on Disability Affairs–Governing Board	EO 709, s. 2008	✓		✓
Government Procurement Policy Board	RA 9184	✓		
Development Academy of the Philippines–Board of Trustees	EO 288, s. 1987	✓		
DSWD–Pantawid Pamilya National Advisory Committee	RA 11310	✓		✓
Private Education Assistance Committee	EO 156, s. 1968	✓		
Presidential Human Rights Committee	AO 163, s. 2002	✓		
Advisory Committee on Science and Technology Scholarships	RA 7687	✓		
Philippines National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency–Multisectoral Advisory Body	EO 635, s. 1980	✓		
Philippine Science Heritage Center Advisory Committee	RA 9107	✓		
Interagency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas	EO 252, s. 2000	✓		
Interagency Council on Violence Against Women and Their Children	RA 9262	✓		
National Council Against Child Labor	EO 92, s. 2019	✓		
Interagency Committee on Economic and Financial Literacy	RA 10922	✓	✓	✓
Interagency Investment Promotion Coordinating Committee	RA 11647		✓	✓
First Time Jobseekers Assistance Act Interagency Monitoring Committee	RA 11261	✓	✓	✓
Interagency Committee on National Security Policy/Strategy	EO 37, s. 2023			✓
Interagency Committee on Education Statistics	PSA MO 8, s. 2019	✓	✓	✓
Interagency Committee on Labor and Productivity Statistics	PSA MO 7, s. 2020			✓



National-Level Coordinative Mechanisms	Legal Basis	DepEd	CHED	TESDA
Interagency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs	EO 5, s. 2017	✓		✓
Interagency Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance	AO 42, s. 2014	✓		✓
Interagency Committee on Environmental Health	EO 489, s. 1991	✓		
Interagency Committee on Tobacco	RA 9211	✓		
Committee for the Special Protection of Children	EO 275, s. 1995	✓		
Career Guidance Advocacy Program Working Group	RA 11206	✓	✓	✓
Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law-National Implementation Team	RA 10354	✓		
DSWD Technical Working Group for Solo Parents Welfare	RA 11861	✓		
Philippine Skills Framework Initiative	Memorandum of Understanding	✓	✓	✓
Interagency Task Force on the National Employment Recovery Strategy	JMC 001-2021	✓	✓	✓
National Technical Working Group for Healthy Learning Institutions	JAO No. 2022- 001	✓	✓	✓
National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan Interagency Committee	Initiated by TESDA	✓	✓	✓
Committee on Children and HIV/AIDS	Initiated by CWC	✓		
National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism	Initiated by DILG	✓		
National Youth Commission, National Advisory Committee and 2nd Philippine Youth Development Plan External Task Force Committee for Education	RA 8044			✓
Interagency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Task Group on Food Security	Resolution No. 25	✓		
Interagency Task Force on Zero Hunger	EO 101, s. 2020	✓	✓	
Tuberculosis National Coordinating Committee	RA 10767	✓		
Financial Inclusion Steering Committee	EO 208, s. 2016	✓		
National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict	EO 70, s. 2018	✓	✓	✓
Philippine Science High School System Board of Trustees	RA 8496	✓		
Boy Scouts of the Philippines	RA 7278	✓		
Girl Scouts of the Philippines	RA 10073	✓		

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, attendance in all the interagency bodies would require a considerable amount of time due to their sheer number. TESDA and CHED sit in almost a third of the 68 interagency bodies, each holding 26 and 24 memberships, respectively. DepEd has the most number of commitments, holding 64 memberships in all. In addition, the agency also bears the responsibility of meeting regional as well as international commitments, which includes representation on the governing boards of 14 Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization regional centers as well as various working groups of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to name a few.

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## Recommendations

**Given the foregoing insights, the standing committee recommends studying the establishment of a national-level coordinating mechanism.**

This mechanism would include the following components:

- Coordinative functions focused on key areas requiring close collaboration among the agencies:
  - planning, projection, and target setting of the whole education system
  - design of pathways through the key stages and transition points between the segments of the education system
  - teacher training and quality
  - sharing of education statistics and information
  - monitoring of targets for learning outcomes
- Coordinating executive or office with the authority and political backing that enables it to wield power, which could be modeled after the coordinating ministries of Indonesia, the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council, and the National Economic and Development Authority Development Budget Coordination Committee, but this requires further study;
- Policies specifying the level of representation and regularity of meetings involving both cabinet-level representation to ensure buy-in and technical-level representation from the director up to the undersecretary to foster involved discussions and closer coordination;

- Support from a highly technical permanent secretariat that is able to do prework on issues that need to be agreed upon; and
- Mechanisms for exacting accountability for outcomes, with clearly defined targets as a starting point.

The Commission also recommends studying how the capacity to exercise oversight of both the Office of the President and the Legislature could be strengthened. This would ensure continuous technical support across political administrations, particularly in tracking the attainment of long-term targets in education.

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## Priority Area 25: Integrated system of performance management and accountability

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Issue: Misalignment and inadequacy of performance management and accountability systems within the education sector encompass challenges at various levels, including the overall public sector, agency-specific frameworks, and individual teacher assessments.

## **EDCOM II Findings**

The Commission conducted focus group discussions and workshops with incumbent and former officials and technical personnel from DepEd, CHED, and TESDA to gain a better understanding of performance management and accountability in the education sector.

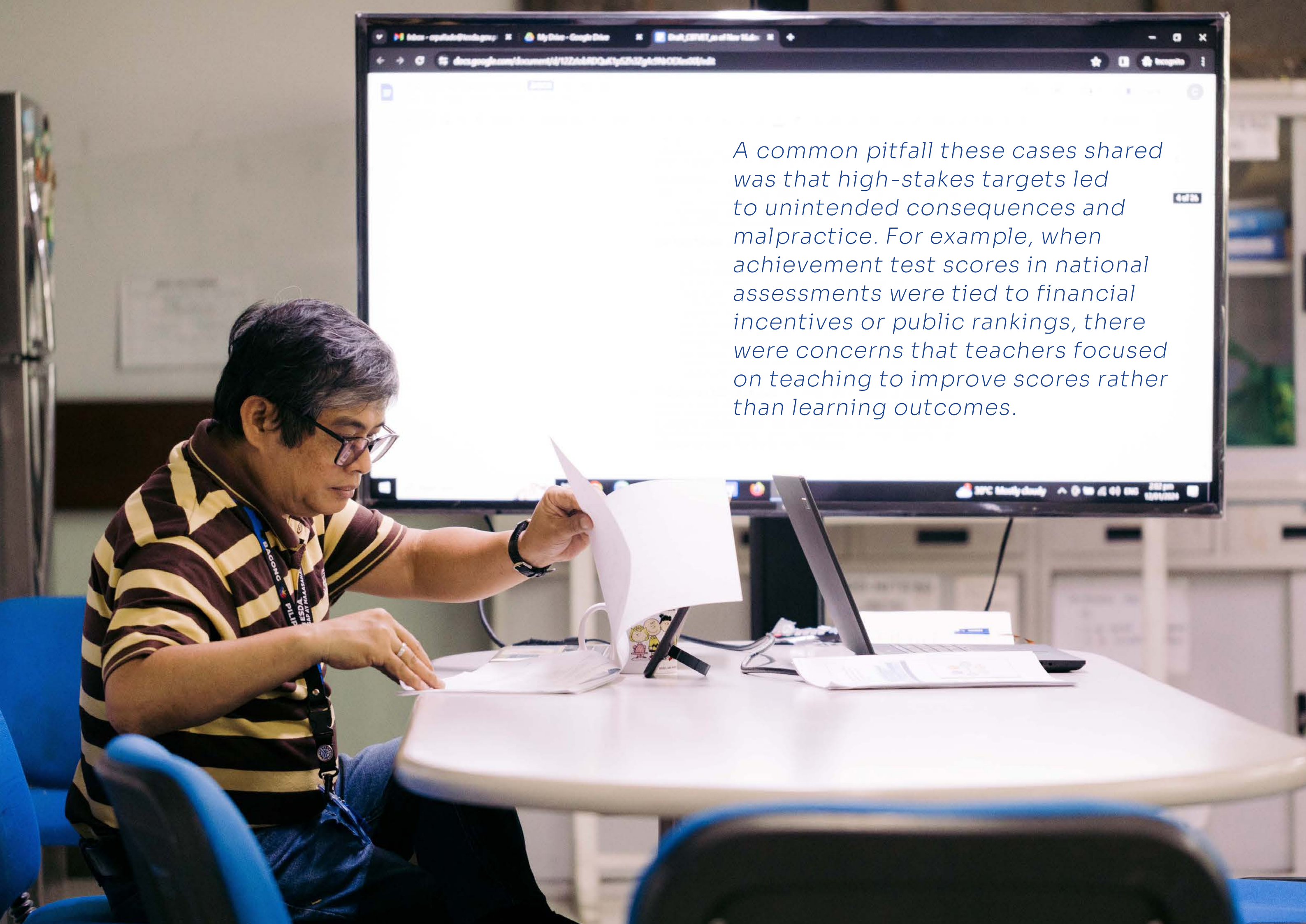
Misalignments were identified in the systems and accountability frameworks employed to monitor and oversee performance at the system, agency, and individual levels within the public sector. Examples of such frameworks include the performance-informed budget, the Philippine Development Plan, and DepEd's Results-Based Performance Management System. These systems fail to hold individuals accountable and provide incentives for enhanced performance to contribute to learning. In the context of basic education, an examination of guidelines and tools revealed that school performance management and accountability systems prioritize compliance and the collection of means of verification rather than evaluating pedagogical practices and strategies. Additionally, the performance management system for individual teachers, despite having an educational focus, remains more process-oriented than outcome-oriented. This means that the assessment places greater emphasis on teaching procedures than potential learning outcomes. This process-oriented approach is evident in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (2017) and its reflection in the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form. One of the 7 domains required for a 21st-century teacher is content knowledge and pedagogy, wherein the focus is the implementation of effective teaching strategies in the classroom. On the other hand, none of the domains focus on the application of learning results. A class's learning outcome has no effect on a teacher's performance.

EDCOM II partnered with Improved Learning Outcomes for the Philippines (ILO-Ph) and Delivery Associates to identify and understand global best practices in performance management systems. Delivery Associates identified 3 educational performance management systems: Punjab, Pakistan; New South Wales, Australia; and Indonesia. Delivery Associates also included a performance management practice from the health sector of New South Wales, Australia. Based on these case studies, best practices and common pitfalls were identified.

Best practices across all cases include:

- Creating targets that were small in number, easy to understand, outcome oriented, and holistic;
- Using performance management as a diagnostic tool rather than as punitive measure;
- Differentiating targets across different management systems to account for external drivers of performance;
- Remembering systemic equity when using performance measures; and
- Having an accompanying system of support to drive improvements.

A common pitfall these cases shared was that high-stakes targets led to unintended consequences and malpractice. For example, when achievement test scores in national assessments were tied to financial incentives or public rankings, there were concerns that teachers focused on teaching to improve scores rather than learning outcomes.

A man with glasses and a brown and yellow striped polo shirt is seated at a white desk. He is looking down at a document he is holding. On the desk, there is a laptop, a printer, and some papers. Behind him is a large monitor displaying a slide with text. The slide text reads: "A common pitfall these cases shared was that high-stakes targets led to unintended consequences and malpractice. For example, when achievement test scores in national assessments were tied to financial incentives or public rankings, there were concerns that teachers focused on teaching to improve scores rather than learning outcomes." The monitor also shows a browser window with a Google Docs link and a system tray at the bottom with the time 2:02 pm and date 12/21/2024.

*A common pitfall these cases shared was that high-stakes targets led to unintended consequences and malpractice. For example, when achievement test scores in national assessments were tied to financial incentives or public rankings, there were concerns that teachers focused on teaching to improve scores rather than learning outcomes.*

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## Priority Area 26: Efficiency and equity in financing, resource mobilization, and delivery of education

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Issue: The historical and persistent underinvestment in education in the Philippines has had detrimental effects on the quality of education.

### **EDCOM II Findings**








EDCOM I identified government underinvestment as a principal reason for the continuous decline in education quality. At the time, government expenditure on education was only 2.7% of the gross domestic product. This increased to 3.6% in the period 2014–2022, with the highest-to-date investment occurring in 2017 at 3.9% (World Bank, 2023). While this approximates the 4.0% minimum benchmark recommended in the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration, it pales in comparison to the contemporary spending levels of our ASEAN neighbors, with Vietnam and Malaysia at 4.2% and Singapore at 25.8% in 2018 (Albert et al., 2021). EDCOM I had made a similar observation three decades prior, using public education expenditures as a percentage of the gross national product for comparison. The Philippines made the lowest educational investments in ASEAN, with Thailand and Malaysia investing more than twice as much. Meanwhile, developed countries such as Japan, the United States, Germany, and Denmark invested at least 4 times more (Congressional Commission on Education, 1993).

Improvements in spending can also be observed by comparing the total education budget against the national budget. From 2010 to 2017, the share of education in the national budget averaged around 15.0% (World Bank, 2021). The same trend held after the COVID-19 pandemic, with the education budget reaching 17.0% of the national budget in 2023 and 16.0% in the proposed 2024

budget. This shows marked improvement compared to the average 12.2% share of education in the decade leading up to EDCOM I, with the lowest share of 10.7% in 1987. However, this falls below the 20.0% benchmark for middle-income countries. Citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority and the DBM, Abrigo (2021) has also observed that aggregate household spending on education in 2019 has more than doubled in comparison to aggregate spending levels the decade prior.

In terms of government spending per student, estimates from recent data show an overall increase from Php 12,982 in 2015 to Php 19,160 in 2019 for early childhood and basic education, and Php 13,206 to Php 29,507 for tertiary education (Tenazas, 2022). However, using 2017 per student spending for comparison, it can be discerned from Table 2 that the Philippines pales in comparison to its regional and aspirational peers:

**TABLE 2****2022 PISA Scores and Cumulative Education Spending of Selected Countries**

Country	Cumulative Spending (USD PPP)	 Math	 Reading	 Science
 Philippines	11,000	355	347	356
 Vietnam	13,800	469	462	472
 Malaysia	50,700	409	388	416
 Singapore	166,100	575	543	561

Note: Data from PISA 2022 Results Factsheets














While higher levels of education spending do not immediately translate to better learning outcomes, an analysis of the 2018 results indicates that “there is a positive relationship between investment in education and average performance—up to a threshold of USD 50,000 in cumulative expenditure per student from age 6 to 15” (Schleicher, 2019, p. 20). Abrigo points out that the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) analysis “is suggestive that greater resources may be needed to raise schooling quality, especially in resource-poor settings” (2021, p. 13). To illustrate the point, the cumulative spending as well as the Math, Reading, and Science scores from the 2022 PISA are shown in Table 2.

It is interesting to note that Vietnam outperforms Malaysia in all three areas by at least 60 points, despite the latter’s higher cumulative spending. This may indicate that some education systems are more efficient and strategic at allocating their resources. In the case of the Philippines, the stagnant trend in the National Achievement Test scores as well as the dismal performance in the international large-scale assessments despite robust growth in education spending suggest there is room for improvement in how we have managed and allocated our resources thus far.

Finally, an analysis of the budget also shows significant variances in per capita investments across levels of education in the past 5 years. Research by Tenazas (2022) highlights that between 2015 and 2020, increased government allocations to education were actually mostly at the tertiary level, with per student expenditure rising from only Php 13,206 to Php 29,507. In contrast, during the same period, investments at the primary level modestly improved and even fluctuated.

**TABLE 3**  
**Public Expenditure per Student: Philippines**  
**and Selected Countries 2017 USD PPP**

Country	Primary	Secondary
 Singapore	16,704	20,632
 Brunei Darussalam	5,401	14,392
 Japan	8,729	9,628
 South Korea	11,087	11,219
 Malaysia	4,302	6,024
 Thailand	3,676	2,838
 Indonesia	1,348	1,068
 Philippines	813	777
 Lao PDR	564	776
 Myanmar	393	518
 Timor-Leste	272	259

Note: Adapted from Abrigo, 2021, p. 4

TENEMENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PAARALANG ELEMENTARYA NG TENEMENT

TENEMENT ELEM. SCHOOL



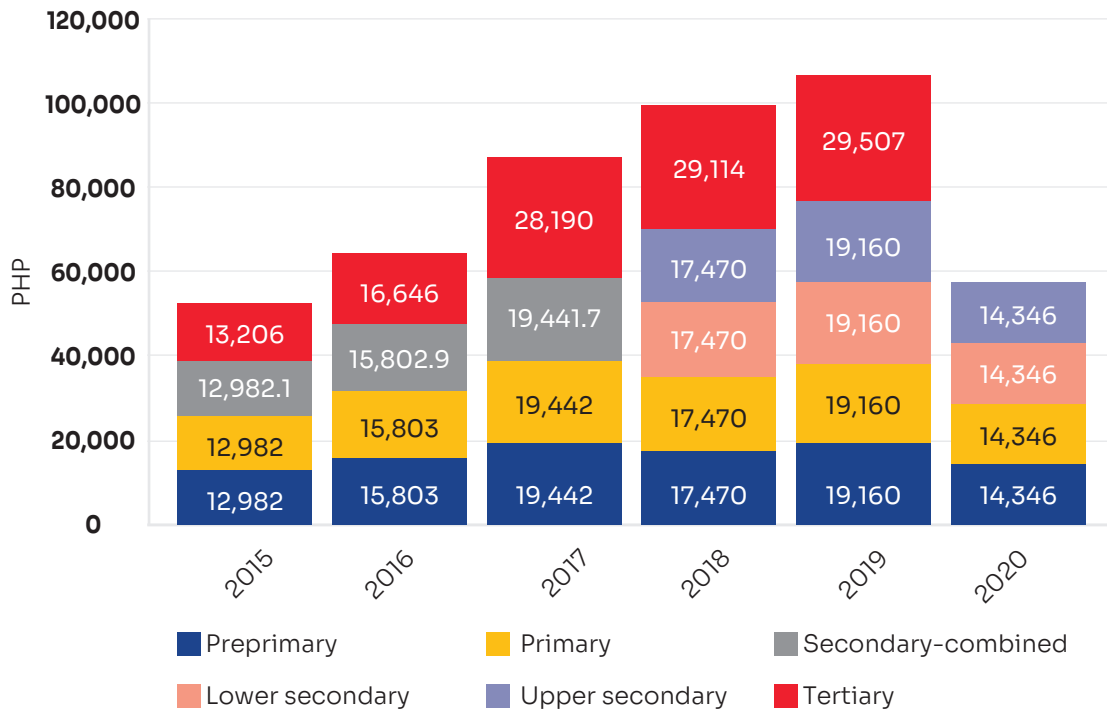
**CITY OF TAGUIG HOTLINES**  
For an emergency or disaster,  
calling Taguig City Hall is the best way to go.

021-858-0700	021-858-0712
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Handwritten notice on a green wall, possibly a school policy or schedule.



**FIGURE 5**  
**Public Education Expenditure per Student**  
**in Basic Education and Tertiary Education**



*Note: Between 2015 and 2017, prior to the introduction of the K to 12 Program, lower and upper secondary education were considered as one secondary education path. Tertiary education was not available for 2020.*

Source: Tenazas (2022)

In view of the standing Commission’s prioritization of decentralization as an area of study for year 1, the sections that follow discuss findings and insights focused on 2 resource pools that are most accessible to schools: the school MOOE and the Special Education Fund (SEF). The former is the proportion of the DepEd budget for maintenance and other operating expenses earmarked and released to schools. The latter is a fund generated at the local level through the collection of taxes.

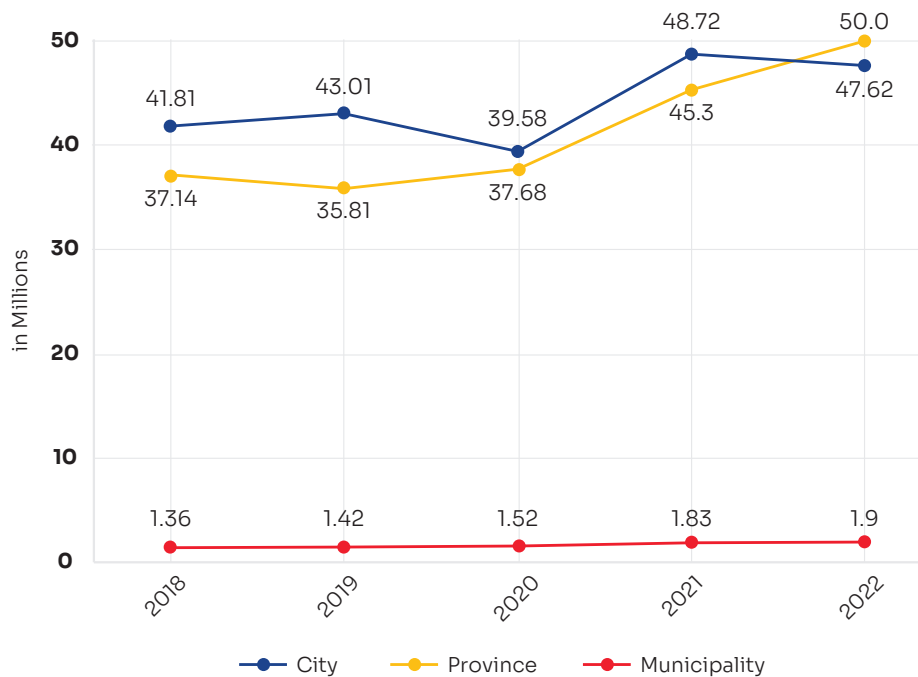
**Trends in SEF income and expenditures reveal that historical background, legislative framework, and recent developments impact the utilization of SEF at the local level.** The promulgation of RA 5447 in 1968 established the SEF as a means for local governments “to contribute to the financial support of the goals of education.” The SEF is derived from a 1% tax surcharge on real property and is managed by a local school board (LSB). Under Section 272 of RA 7164, or the Local Government Code of 1991, cities receive the full proceeds of the special education tax, whereas provinces and municipalities within their territorial jurisdiction have to divide proceeds equally.

The Local Government Code stipulates that the LSB shall prepare an annual budget sourced from the SEF to provide the “supplementary budgetary needs for the operation and maintenance of public schools within the province, city, or municipality.” In August 1990, deliberations in the House of Representatives clarified that the SEF was intended to be utilized “for additional teachers or other requirements if the national government cannot provide funding therefor” (as cited in Commission on Audit [COA] v. Province of Cebu, 2001). Consistent with this intent, the Local Government Code delimited SEF allocation to the “operation and maintenance of public schools, construction, and repair of school buildings, facilities, and equipment, educational research, purchase of books and periodicals, and sports development.”

However, a shift in perspective on the SEF’s purpose can be discerned from recent laws that expanded the fund’s use beyond its original supplementary function. The promulgation of RA 10410 (Early Years Act of 2013), RA 110371 (Masustansiyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act), and RA 11510 (Alternative Learning System Act) have lodged additional responsibilities to local government units (LGUs) pertinent to education and have specifically authorized LSBs to allocate portions of their SEF for the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Program and the National Feeding Program, and the delivery of the Alternative Learning System at the local level. These laws involve functions and concomitant expenditures that are distinct from those identified in the Local Government Code, such as the cost of organizing parent cooperatives and implementing community-based ECCD programs, as well as costs associated with health examinations, vaccinations, deworming, and community literacy mapping activities.

Several bills are also pending in both houses of Congress that seek to expand the menu of allowable expenditures further. A cursory inventory of some of these bills—namely, House Bill (HB) Nos. 1286 and 1580, and Senate Bill (SB) No. 155—yields 19 additional expenditure items. These developments beg the question of whether or not existing SEF collections could adequately address the growing range of education and education-related needs and requirements being lodged under the purview of LGUs. The succeeding section seeks to answer this question by analyzing SEF income and expenditure data for 2018–2022 from the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF).

**FIGURE 6**  
**Median SEF Income by LGU Type**



*Note: The graph for provinces and municipalities shows an upward trend in median SEF income. There are dips in the median SEF income of cities, but the trend overall is still increasing.*

Analysis of the 2018–2022 data shows that cities account for 65% of SEF collections, while provinces and municipalities have an almost equal share at 17% and 18%, respectively. This is quite similar to the SEF distribution in 2004–2008, with cities collecting 66% of total SEF income, while provinces and municipalities accounted for only 16% and 19%, respectively (Manasan et al., 2011). As for median income, this has exhibited an upward trend, with year-on-year growth averaging 4% for cities, 8% for provinces, and 9% for municipalities.



GOVERNMENT PERMIT

2022

OSDS ACEF-GIAHEP

2019  
2022

OSDS ACEF-GIAHEP

2022

NOTICE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

CHED SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

2022

Temporary Permit

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Memorandum from the Office of the Chairman CHEDCO CHEDROs

2007

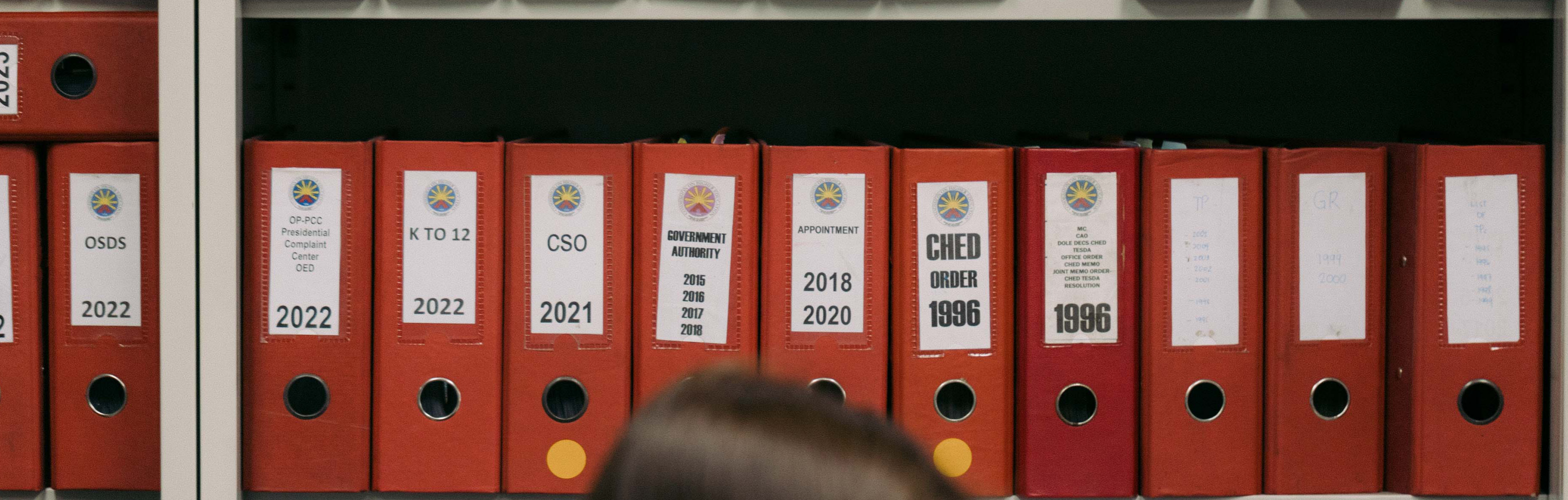
CAO

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OP-PCC Presidential Complaint Center OED

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K TO 12

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2021

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

2015  
2016  
2017  
2018

APPOINTMENT

2018  
2020

CHED ORDER 1996

MC CAO DOLE DECS CHED TESDA OFFICE ORDER CHED MEMO JOINT MEMO ORDER CHED TESDA RESOLUTION 1996

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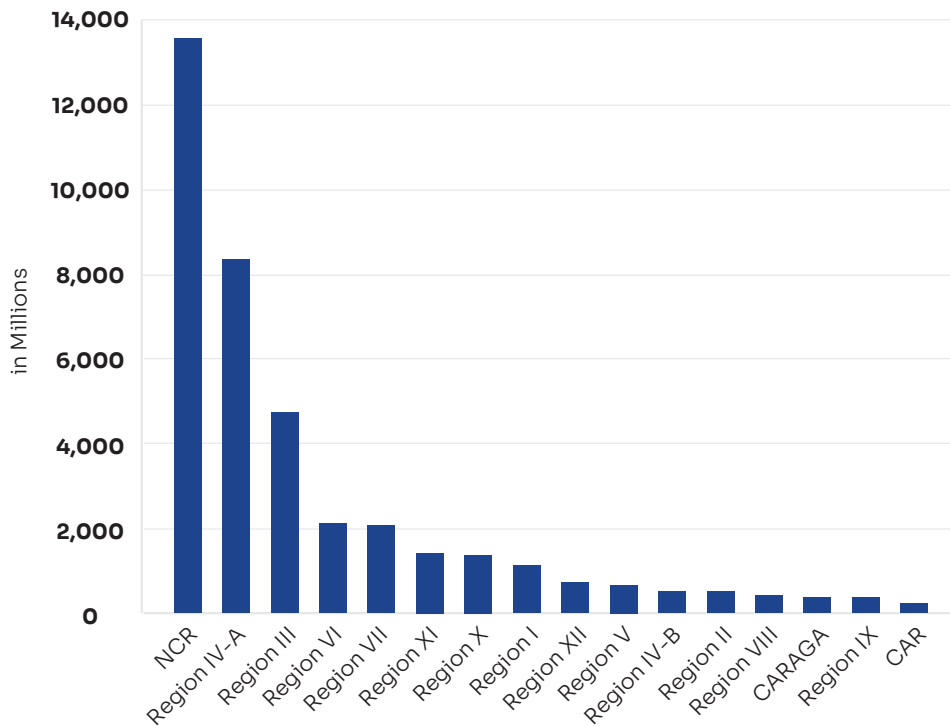
DBM

DBM

DBM

While total SEF collections for any given year seem small relative to the national government’s basic education budget, they are substantial when compared to the MOOE budget of DepEd (Manasan et al., 2011). In 2022, the total SEF collected by local governments was Php 43.8 billion, 20% higher than the Php 36.6 billion national government funding allocated for MOOE released directly to DepEd field units and public schools that same year. This is a salient comparison because, in the context of a highly centralized basic education bureaucracy, the SEF is a more accessible resource pool to schools, unlike the bulk of the DepEd budget that remains centrally managed. Assuming that democratic and participatory practices are exercised by LGUs, the SEF could provide substantial support to schools and become an education financing tool that is more responsive to local needs.

**FIGURE 7**  
**SEF Income by Region, 2018–2022**



*Note: The distribution is based on average SEF incomes aggregated by region from 2018 to 2022. BARMM LGUs were excluded due to incomplete data.*

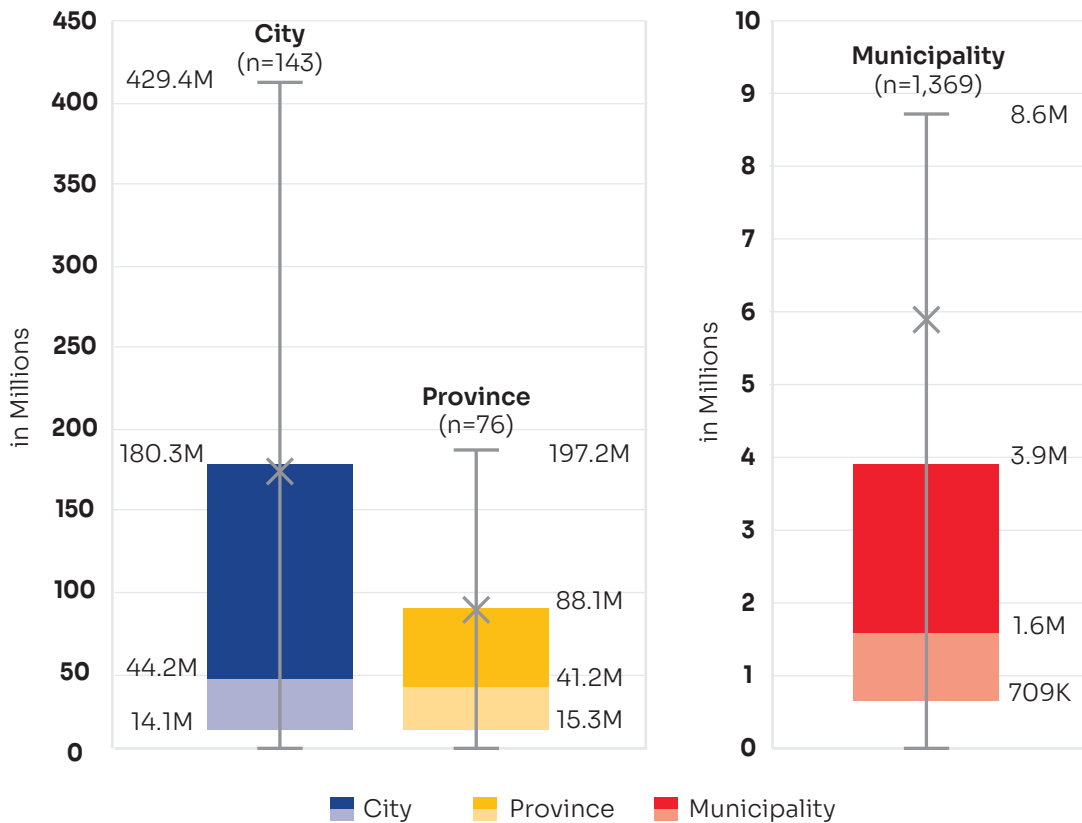


**In terms of SEF income disparity, significant differences are noticeable**

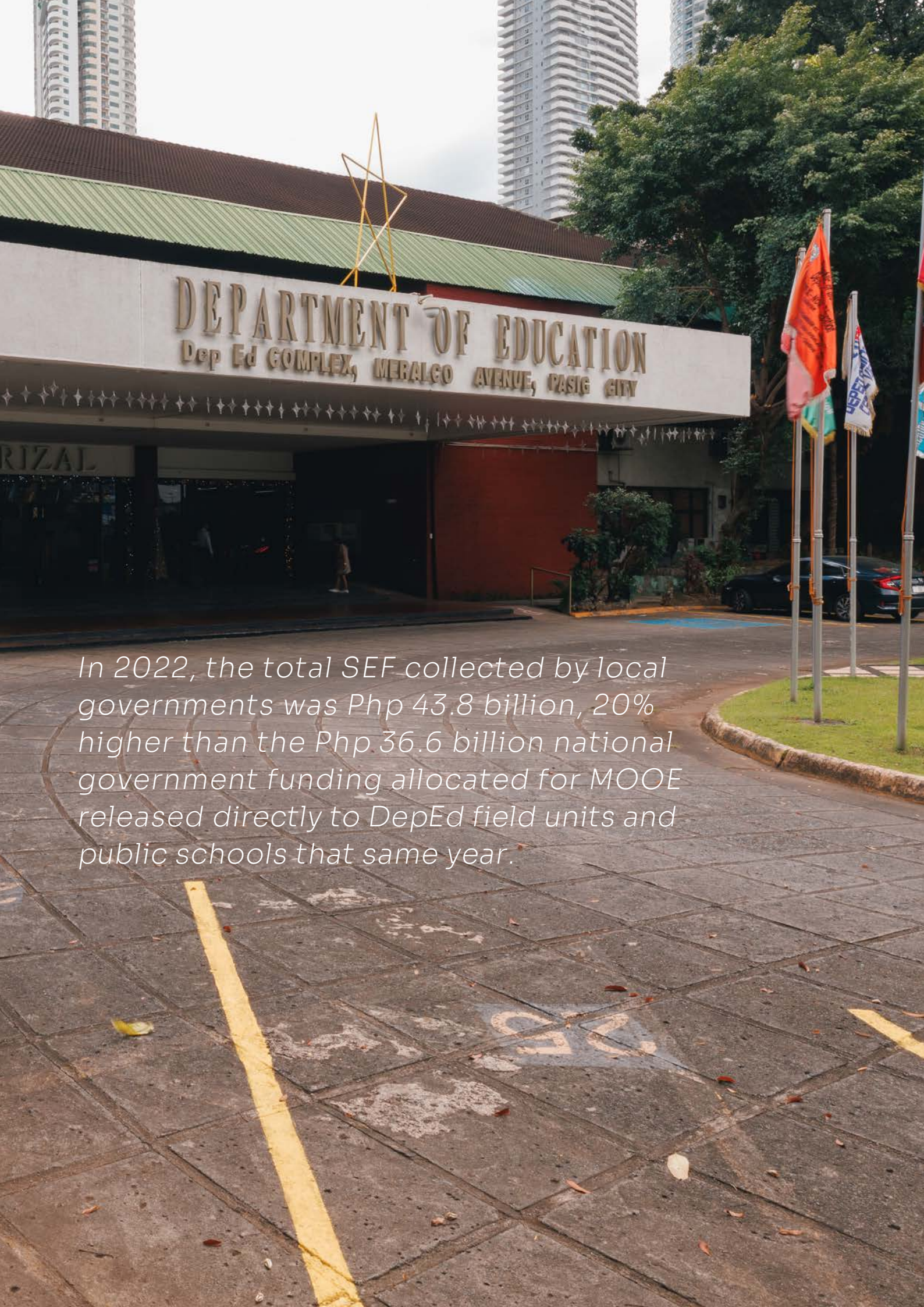
**across regions.** However, it is hardly surprising that the NCR and the contiguous zones of Region IV-A and Region III that comprise the Greater Metro Manila Area are the three highest SEF income earners, given that property values are highest in this highly urbanized zone.

Further analysis shows that municipalities have the lowest SEF income levels, with an average median SEF of Php 1.6 million, or a mere 4% of the average median SEF income of cities (Php 44.1 million) and provinces (Php 41.2 million). Examining the distribution of SEF income reveals a stark difference between cities and provinces on the one hand and municipalities on the other, as shown in Figure 8.

**FIGURE 8**  
**SEF Income Distribution by LGU Type**



*Note: The distribution is based on the average SEF incomes of each LGU from 2018 to 2022. BARMM LGUs were excluded because of incomplete data. Outliers were excluded from the chart for clarity.*



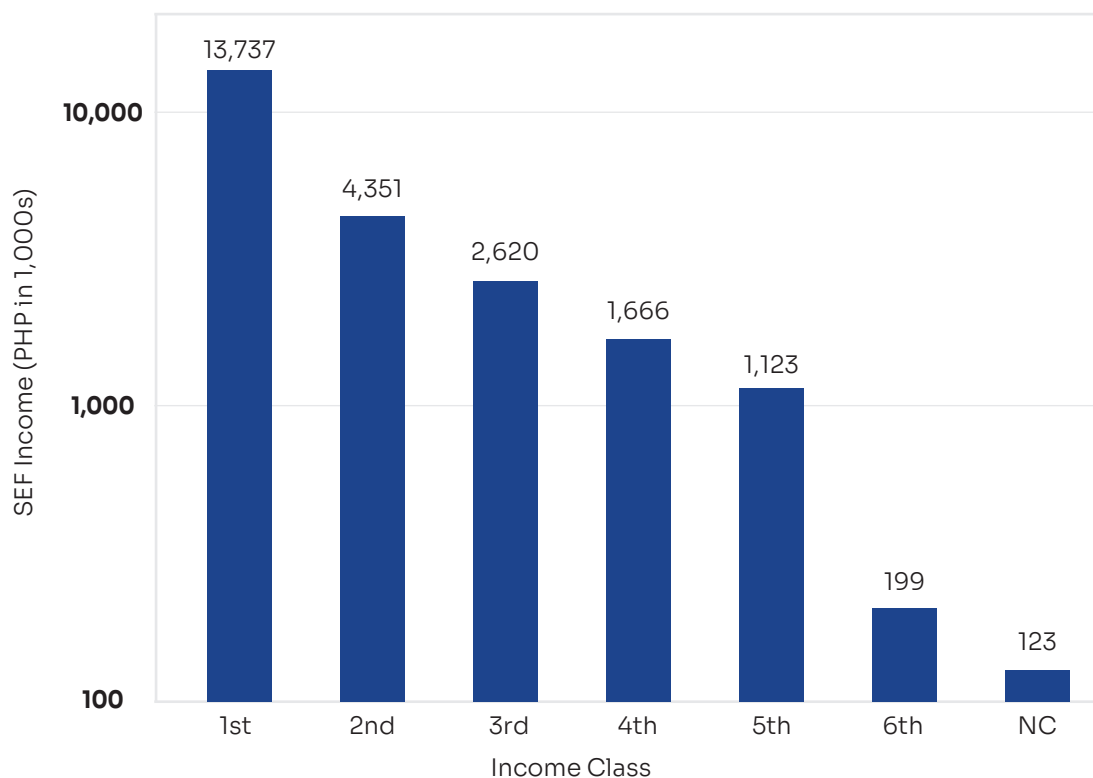
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Dep Ed COMPLEX, MERALCO AVENUE, PASIG CITY

*In 2022, the total SEF collected by local governments was Php 43.8 billion, 20% higher than the Php 36.6 billion national government funding allocated for MOOE released directly to DepEd field units and public schools that same year.*

The box plots for all three LGU types have medians closer to the first quartile than the third quartile, indicating a right-skewed distribution. This means that most cities have SEF incomes ranging from Php 14.1 million to Php 180.3 million, while most provinces have SEF incomes falling between Php 15.4 million and Php 88.1 million. On the other hand, half of the municipalities have SEF incomes ranging from Php 709,000 to Php 3.9 million. This means that the SEF income of a typical city or province would be at least 4 times higher than that of a typical municipality.

There is also considerable disparity when we compare municipalities against each other. Figure 9 shows that the gap in the average SEF income per income class increasingly widens as you go from first class to second class and so on. The most glaring disparity can be observed between the first-income-class and sixth-income-class municipalities and municipalities that have no classification. On average, first-income-class municipalities have 68 times more SEF income than sixth-income-class municipalities and 111 times more than municipalities with no classification.

**FIGURE 9**  
**Average SEF Income of Municipalities by Income Class, 2018–2022**



Source: Data adapted from the BLGF 2018–2022 SEF income and expenditures dataset.

*“The absence of a clear framework that guides how the provincial SEF could complement the municipal SEF puts municipalities at a disadvantage, particularly in localities with highly partisan political dynamics.”*

— EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9

**The considerable income gap between municipal and provincial SEFs was apparent in EDCOM II consultations with LGUs.**

A participating fifth-income-class municipality reported that, on average, it could only collect Php 2.83 million SEF, which limited the LGU’s school infrastructure support to classroom repairs. To construct school buildings and facilities, the municipal school board requested funding from its provincial LGU, which collects an average of Php 209.3 million SEF annually, roughly 54 times more than the municipality’s SEF (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 16).

In another consultation, 2 municipal local chief executives (LCEs) also remarked on the limited resource envelopes of their SEF, in spite of successful efforts to improve tax collections (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9). The LCE from a first-income-class municipality raised their SEF to Php 12 million, while the LCE from a second-income-class municipality raised their SEF from Php 0.5 to Php 2 million. Since the SEF was insufficient, particularly the funding requirements for ECCD, the LCEs tapped other resources, such as the Gender and Development Fund and the General Fund. One LCE also exerted influence on the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and barangay to allocate funds for ECCD. Reflecting on this experience, one LCE shared the following remark:

*“Ang frustration kasi namin, gusto mong tumulong sa mga kids, sa education, but very limited kami sa funds so diskarte talaga ng Mayor and Local School Boards.” (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9)*

This disparity in SEF income is explained by differences in property values in favor of cities, which tend to be more urbanized, and the previously mentioned stipulation in Section 272 of the Local Government Code, which enables special education tax collections to accrue exclusively to the city school board (Manasan et al., 2011). The absence of a clear framework that guides how the provincial SEF could complement the municipal SEF puts municipalities at a disadvantage, particularly in localities with highly partisan political dynamics (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9).

In the comprehensive review of the SEF conducted by Manasan et al., the researchers observed that “[m]any LGUs think that there is a need to make the distribution of aggregate SEF resources more equitable across LGUs” (2011, p. 38). Some LGUs went one step further by walking the talk through the provision of support to less-resourced LGUs. One city provided buses, books, and other assistance charged against its General Fund, while another city undertook Adopt-a-School initiatives. Meanwhile, participants in EDCOM II consultations have also raised the idea of an “equalization fund” (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9; 2023, Nov 16), though its viability requires further study.

**Regarding spending priorities and utilization, the average SEF utilization rates over the past 5 years suggest a decline during the pandemic, dropping from 66.7% in 2019 to 61.7% in 2021.** However, there are signs of recovery if utilization increases in 2023 from 62.8% in 2022. Ranking the expenditure categories in the BLGF dataset shows that SEF is primarily utilized by LGUs for general administration, which includes the hiring of human resources and procurement, followed by providing subsidies to defray the education expenses of individual students and providing support to elementary and secondary schools. However, the absence of specific program information from the BLGF dataset prevents more granular analysis. As for the data collected by DepEd and COA, while individual reports contain detailed information, these agencies do not maintain an information system on SEF, which makes the consolidation of data difficult.



*The most glaring disparity can be observed between the first-income-class and sixth-income-class municipalities and municipalities that have no classification. On average, first-income-class municipalities have 68 times more SEF income than sixth-income-class municipalities and 111 times more than municipalities with no classification.*

To get a sense of the spending priorities of LGUs, prior studies consolidated program information from the financial documents of sample provinces, cities, and municipalities. In the case of Manasan et al. (2011), the study examined the spending behavior of 32 local governments for 2008, while the Synergeia Foundation (2021) looked into the spending of 67 local governments for 2018. Both studies found that MOOE comprised the largest share of SEF expenditures, followed by capital outlay (CO) and personnel services (PS). Examining these further shows that the spending priorities of LGUs appear to be similar over the years, as shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**Spending Priorities per Major Expense Category in 2008 Compared to 2018**

MOOE		CO		Personnel Services	
2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
1. Sports development	1. School/office supplies	1. School building construction	1. School building construction	1. Salaries and wages of teaching personnel	1. Salaries and wages
2. School/office supplies	2. Utilities	2. Repair and maintenance	2. Acquisition of school sites	2. Salaries and wages of non-teaching personnel	2. Incentives and honoraria
3. Seminars, trainings	3. Sports and cultural activities		3. Repair and maintenance		3. Benefits
4. Utility expenses	4. Seminars, workshops				
5. Division office	5. Educational research				

*Note: Information adapted from Manasan et al. (2011) and Synergeia Foundation (2021)*

However, since the samples considered in each study comprise different LGUs, we cannot make any further comparisons.

When aggregated at the national level, the unutilized SEF funds in 2022 reach Php 16.3 billion. Computing the surplus of the top 100 LGUs with the highest SEF balance reveals that only a small number of the country's LGUs are responsible for Php 13.3 billion, or 89.3% of unspent funds. Findings from Manasan et al. (2011) and EDCOM II consultations in Iloilo (2023, Nov 16) indicate 3 possible factors contributing to these balances:

- 1) Some LSBs may have overly conservative revenue and income estimates because they are not allowed to incur overdrafts in their SEF account.
- 2) Some LSBs intentionally post a surplus at the end of the fiscal year in order to meet expenditures starting from day 1 of the next budget year since inflows into the SEF account are not likely to occur until March.
- 3) These "surplus" funds may already be obligated but not disbursed, such as when delays occur in the procurement of construction materials for school buildings.

However, examining the individual SEF utilization rates of the LGUs shows 2 contrasting spending behaviors shown in the bimodal distribution in Figure 10. The first peak is at the near-0 mark, where the cluster of blue dots represents LGUs with a very low utilization rate. From 2018 to 2022, about 11% of LGUs utilized only 10% or less of their SEF income. The second peak can be seen in the clustering of blue dots close to the historical median line. This means that close

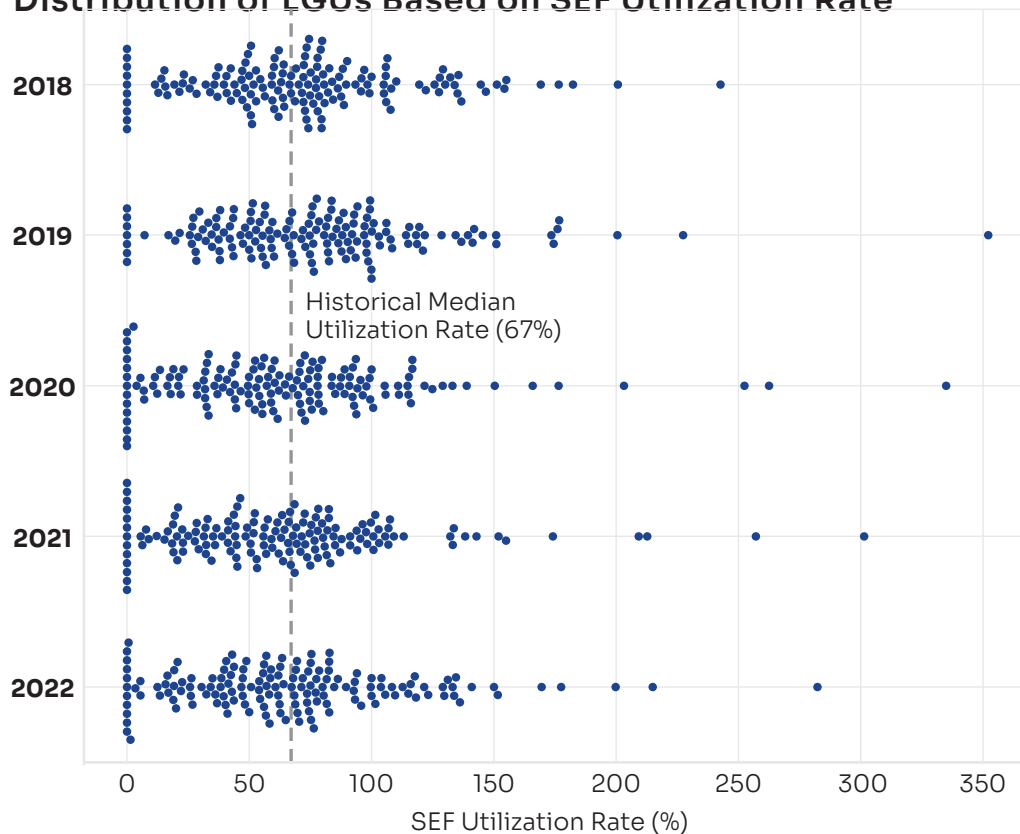
*SEF is primarily utilized by LGUs for general administration, which includes the hiring of human resources and procurement, followed by providing subsidies to defray the education expenses of individual students and providing support to elementary and secondary schools.*



to half, or around 45%, of LGUs utilized 67% or more of their SEF income. Finally, it is also of interest to note that the bimodal distribution has a long tail to the right, which suggests the presence of outlier LGUs. These outliers, about a fifth of the total LGUs, appear to be spending more than their SEF income.

**FIGURE 10**

**Distribution of LGUs Based on SEF Utilization Rate**



Source: Data adapted from the BLGF 2018–2022 SEF income and expenditures dataset

The consultations conducted by the Standing Committee on Governance and Finance, as well as the sub-committee on ECCD, revealed issues and challenges in education financing faced by LGUs. These include the following:

- Existing SEF guidelines limit the menu of allowable expenditures. One LGU tapped its General Fund, which has more flexibility than the SEF, to ensure that it could fully support its literacy program. This LGU is an awardee of the Literacy Coordinating Council’s National Literacy Awards. (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9).

- The absence of a representative that could champion ECCD needs and concerns in the LSB limits the allocation of the SEF budget for ECCD needs (EDCOM II, 2023, Sep 28). Under the Local Government Code, the membership of the LSB is limited to the local chief executive, the DepEd superintendent or district supervisor, the chair of the local legislative council's education committee, the local treasurer, and representatives from the Sangguniang Kabataan, the federated parent-teacher association, the teachers' organizations, and the nonacademic personnel of public schools. It is unclear who among the members of the LSB could be the voice for ECCD concerns.
- Land utilized for school sites is not maximized because of uncoordinated efforts between the LGU and DepEd to construct school buildings. The practice is not sustainable because of the limited availability of land that could be acquired for schools (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9).
- There are varying interpretations of COA auditors as to which expenditures could be charged against the SEF (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9). One LGU received a COA audit observation for charging education-related expenditures to funds other than the SEF, and yet when the same expenditures were later charged to the SEF, these were also disallowed. Based on the experience of participants, the imposition of audit observations varies depending on the auditor assigned to the LGU. This issue has also been previously cited in prior studies on the SEF (Manasan et al., 2011).
- The influence of political alliances and rivalries in the allocation of SEF was raised in one focus group discussion with LGUs (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 16). The pressures of patronage politics on SEF allocation have been previously recognized in the research literature. Expenditures that were particularly vulnerable to such pressures were the determination of schools for repair and maintenance, as well as the hiring of teacher aides based on preference rather than merit (Manasan et al., 2011).

**Promising practices also surfaced through the consultations.** These practices, listed below, enable LGUs to be better informed about the gamut of education needs in the locality.

- A third-income-class municipality uses the annual improvement plans drafted by schools as the basis for the budget proposal presented to the LSB. One fifth-class municipality developed an electronic monitoring system that consolidates information from school improvement plans, barangay reading centers, and other sources. The LSB and the Office of the Mayor use the digital platform to track which projects have been funded by the School MOOE and which need supplementary funding from the LGU. A focal person is assigned to each school and barangay to update the system. Since ECCD needs are not captured in school improvement plans, the focal person obtains information from day care workers and also inputs these into the system (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 16).
- A fifth-income-class municipality expanded the membership of its LSB to include student representatives, elementary and secondary school heads, as well as representatives from the school governing council and the civil society organizations (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 16).
- In preparing its SEF budget proposal, a fourth-income-class municipal LSB and a fourth-income-class component city hold consultative meetings with teachers and other stakeholders (EDCOM II, 2023 Nov 16). In a similar manner, one city in the NCR holds an education summit annually where learners, parents, teachers, and other community members participate in workshops to identify needs and resource gaps (EDCOM II, 2023, Aug 9).

**Existing levels of School MOOE funds do not adequately cover the full operating costs of public elementary and high schools. This finding was highlighted by the World Bank Public Expenditure Tracking Survey and Quantitative Service Delivery Study and supported by EDCOM II consultations.**

The World Bank found that “despite recent increases . . . existing levels of school MOOE do not cover the full operating costs of public elementary and high schools” (2016, p. 88). EDCOM II consultations with school heads and teachers corroborate these findings. In particular, school heads from Iloilo province and Davao City reported that 30% to 70% of their school MOOE budget is spent to cover utility bills (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 26). The World Bank study also found that schools allocate their budget to regular expenses such as supplies, printing, and routine maintenance, which “does not leave much room for schools to invest in other activities that might support better learning” (2016, p. 75).

One of the reasons for the insufficiency of school funds may be attributed to how the school MOOE budget is computed using the Boncodin formula. The Boncodin formula, introduced in 2013, accounts only for the number of learners, teachers, and classrooms as multipliers, shown below:

<b>School MOOE =</b>	$\text{Fixed Amount} + (\text{Enrollment Cost} \times \text{No. of Learners Enrolled}) + (\text{Teachers Cost} \times \text{No. of Teachers}) + (\text{Classroom Cost} \times \text{No. of Classrooms}) + (\text{Graduating Learners Cost} \times \text{No. of Graduating Learners})$
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This puts small-sized schools and schools with unique contexts at a disadvantage. For example, the actual utility costs of schools using energy-intensive equipment, such as those with information and communications technology laboratories or with technical-vocational-livelihood offerings, would not be accounted for in the existing formula. In DepEd’s submission to the Commission of Materials on School MOOE, the agency noted that the income classification of LGUs where schools are located and the offering of special curricular programs are new parameters to be considered in the agency’s 2024 computation for school MOOE.

*“School heads from Iloilo province and Davao City reported that 30% to 70% of their school MOOE budget is spent to cover utility bills.”*

*— (EDCOM II, 2023, Oct 26)*



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## Priority Area 27: Decentralization and participatory governance

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Issue: A highly centralized governance structure results in limited participation of local government and stakeholders in education governance and a lack of agility and innovation in the system.

### **EDCOM II Findings**

**Challenges persist in the governance of schools, reflecting a broader issue in the decentralization initiative aimed at empowering schools and local communities.** Decentralization through site management, also known as school-based management (SBM), is a “major global education reform thrust which started in the 1980s” (Malana, 2009, p. 2). Following the reorganization of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports into the Department of Education in 2001, the agency adopted SBM as a key reform strategy, continuing the aim of the Schools First Initiative (SFI) “to empower the school and its community stakeholders to address access and quality issues in basic education effectively” (DepEd, 2012, p. 5).

Within the law’s legal framework, DepEd instituted SBM to make those closest to the delivery of services more accountable for the results of their operations. SBM “decentralizes the decision-making from the Central Office and field offices to individual schools to enable them to better respond to their specific education needs” (DepEd, 2015a). This was the response of DepEd to the issue of excessive centralization that the Monroe Survey noted as early as the 1920s (Bautista et al., 2009; Malana, 2009).

DepEd’s initial move toward decentralization is best exemplified through the implementation of externally funded projects like the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) and the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) (Bautista et al., 2009; Malana, 2009). BEAM invested heavily in capacity

building; it capacitated teachers, school heads, division staff, and regional personnel to create and support learner-centered classroom environments (Bautista et al., 2009; Malana, 2009). TEEP, on the other hand, had a more flexible approach and provided support for a range of school needs, from construction to procurement and improvement of learning outcomes (Bautista et al., 2009; Malana, 2009).

According to Bautista, et al. (2009), despite the differences between BEAM and TEEP, “both projects had notable effects on pupil performance.”

While the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda, a comprehensive set of reforms, was launched in 2006 to sustain and build on the gains of the SFI (DepEd, 2012) and the lessons from BEAM and TEEP (Malana, 2009), a number of constraints prevented SBM from being fully implemented and from truly transforming education on the ground (Malana, 2009).

Apart from DepEd’s dependence on foreign-assisted projects that prevented the agency from developing “an institutionalized system of processing and reviewing project outcomes and their implications for reform throughout the public school system,” “the rapid turnover of the education leadership in previous years has . . . resulted in breaks in the momentum of decentralization as embodied in the SBM reform” (Malana, 2009, p. 5).

This is perhaps why a 2014 assessment conducted by the World Bank found that most elementary and secondary schools have put in place “only a minimum number of arrangements for community participation and for taking action to improve learning outcomes” (2016, p. 72). Challenges in school improvement planning, the inability to raise enough resources, and the limited engagement of external stakeholders such as parents and the LGU were the key hindrances to SBM implementation cited by school principals. Consistent with the World Bank’s findings, public school teachers, principals, field personnel, and officials consulted by EDCOM II identified limited school autonomy, resources, and participation of particular stakeholders in planning and decision-making as the most pressing issues hindering effective school governance (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6). Probing these issues further revealed that a prevailing one-size-fits-all approach in DepEd engenders this situation. Below are illustrative examples cited by participants:

- **Policies and standards tend to be rigid and fail to account for the diversity of schools.** One example cited by participants was the design of the training and development program for school leaders. It was pointed out that the offerings do not account for the continuum of school leaders' needs, with young, energetic, but inexperienced leaders on the one hand and seasoned leaders motivated to leave a legacy before retirement on the other. Even the existing SBM policy defines only a single path for achieving a good level of practice, which may be difficult for far-flung rural schools. Although this aspect is already being tweaked in the ongoing policy review, this singular path has been in effect since the policy issuance in 2012 and will remain so until repealed.
- **The development of programs and the allocation of resources largely remain centrally managed.** There is only legroom for crafting new programs, but field units from the regions and schools barely participate. Even when they exercise their voice in convergence meetings or the Regional Development Council, little of what is discussed is ultimately financed because the direction and priorities of program owners at the Central Office usually prevail and are allotted a bigger share of the overall agency budget. These programs are then mandated for implementation nationwide. For this reason, participants remarked that downloading funds to the field units is not a sufficient indicator of decentralization because field units have little input in crafting programs and there is limited flexibility in how downloaded funds could be utilized. This centralized allocation of resources manifests down to the school level in the computation of the school MOOE. The Boncodin formula used to determine the school MOOE budget only accounts for the number of learners, classrooms, and teachers. Other relevant factors, such as the socioeconomic composition of the student population, historical allocation received by the school from the local government's Special Education Fund, or even the prevailing power rates in the region where the school is located are not considered.



- **Schools have to wait for the issuance of a memorandum before they can take action**, a state of affairs dubbed by participants as “memocracy” in contrast to “democracy.” This was also corroborated in consultations with LCEs who have experienced initiatives being blocked by the schools division superintendent, citing the lack of a memorandum or approval from offices in the higher governance levels of DepEd. This behavior at the local level likely stems from the long history of centralized and hierarchical control exerted over the DepEd bureaucracy.
- **Stakeholders have limited participation in school improvement planning.** Participants opined that, because of limited budgets for funding improvement initiatives at the school level, most schools craft school improvement plans out of lip service rather than undertake a participatory bottom-up approach. Again, this is consistent with the findings of the World Bank, which found “that fewer than half of all parents interviewed were aware that their school had an improvement plan” (2016, p. 77).

**Consultations with LCEs, legislative council board members, LGU personnel, education officials, and public school heads and teachers indicate that there is support for decentralization of education governance at the local level.** Though education service delivery is not formally devolved in the same manner as health, agriculture, and social welfare services, “informal, ad-hoc devolution in varying states of maturity” is already being implemented locally (EDCOM II, 2023 Nov 16). These consultations have surfaced promising cases of LGUs establishing mechanisms that enable communities to access education services and support schools and teachers in delivering desired learning outcomes.

LCEs participating in consultations recognized that education is a core function of LGUs. They were motivated to become codrivers of education agencies in their jurisdictions because of the anticipated positive effects of human capital development on local economic and social development and to foster a citizenry with the capacity to participate meaningfully in nation-building. However, the absence of a formal policy hinders them from taking a more active role and reaping the benefits of devolution—faster, more focused responses, and innovative solutions that address local context and needs.



*“Limited school autonomy, resources, and participation of particular stakeholders in planning and decision-making as the most pressing issues hindering effective school governance”*

— (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6)

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## Recommendations

In discussions aimed at surfacing ideas on what decentralization of education governance would look like, including the specific responsibilities that could be effectively devolved to the LGUs and those that must remain with the national government, the key themes of policies, processes, assessments, resources, and implementation arrangements emerged. These are discussed in detail below:

**A. In terms of policies, LCEs endorse the national government's key role in standard-setting, focusing on the national curriculum and essential learning competencies.**

LCEs agreed that standard-setting should be the national government's primary responsibility, similar to other countries that have pursued decentralization of their education systems. This includes the development of the national curriculum, especially the determination of the most essential learning competencies. However, it was a common sentiment that the LGU, in collaboration with the DepEd field units, should have some leeway in modifying the curriculum's content and delivery to better account for the local context and address the emerging needs of learners identified through local assessments. Examples cited where modification of the national curriculum was deemed necessary were schools offering the Indigenous Peoples Education program and the Alternative Learning System (ALS). In the case of ALS, some participants remarked that the existing curriculum is too academic and is not responsive to what actual ALS learners need. They believed the ALS curriculum could be better designed by engaging in multistakeholder consultations at the local level. Other policies that LCEs recommended be devolved to LGUs pertained to determining class schedules, teacher workload, and class size.

It is worth noting that the localization of the curriculum is top of mind for DepEd personnel when asked about the potential benefits of decentralizing education. They remark that this would enable teachers to adjust teaching strategies and methods and adopt more targeted and age-appropriate instruction, even though contextualization of curricular content (which includes

localization and indigenization), age-appropriate instruction, and adjustment of teaching strategies are encouraged by existing policy as hallmarks of the K to 12 curricular reform. It appears that field personnel still experience significant constraints and rigidity in implementation, despite wording in existing curricular policies that point to flexibility as a key strategy. This suggests that a culture of “memocracy” articulated by participants in a prior consultation on school governance (EDCOM II, 2023, Jul 6) persists at the lowest levels of the DepEd bureaucracy. Similar behavior was also observed in Malaysia when it moved to decentralize the implementation of more learner-centered curricula in the 1990s:

“Even though teachers, school heads, and school administrators were given a lot of autonomy to implement the new curricula, they seemed to be shackled by the traditional practice of waiting for directives from the top rather than making independent decisions. They would rather rely on specific instructions from above to avoid the risk of being accused of doing something wrong” (Nurul-Awanis et al., 2011, p. 109).

This underscores the need to also account for DepEd’s organizational culture, leadership practices, and performance management in the contemplation of a decentralization reform package to effect not only the transfer of tasks to lower levels of governance but also transform the “nature of the relationship between the central, regional and local levels, moving away from a hierarchical relationship to a division of labor and more mutual independence and self-regulation” (Burns & Köster, 2016, p. 18).

**B. While participant views varied on the extent of LGU involvement in education governance processes, the LGU’s role in stakeholder engagement was deemed crucial.** Additionally, some participants advocated for expanded LGU involvement in procurement and emphasized the importance of establishing robust data-gathering practices for better local-level understanding of education issues.

- Participants had mixed responses on how much LGUs should be involved in hiring teaching and nonteaching personnel and education officials. Those in favor cited responsiveness to local needs, such as:
  - Hiring literacy tutors for communities with low literacy outcomes
  - Hiring teachers for schools with high teacher shortages
  - Augmenting support staff shortages in schools so that teachers are deloaded of nonteaching tasks and can focus on teaching, and school heads can focus on instructional leadership and school management

Some expressed concern about the potential negative impact on education service delivery if LGUs are involved in hiring decisions, especially in highly partisan contexts. They favored the existing situation where uniform hiring standards are applied to prevent political interference in education. Some individuals who were not entirely against LGU involvement in the selection process were open to the idea but recommended that salary decisions should not be devolved. The following suggestions surfaced during the consultations:

- The LCE could be consulted in appointing the school division superintendent.
- The LCE or a representative could participate as a selection panel member.
- The existing application process of DepEd shall be implemented. The LCE will only be involved in the final stage of appointment, whereby the LCE selects and appoints personnel based on the registry of qualified applicants.

Others noted that the current selection practice is already open to some degree of political interference through informal channels. They pointed out that the advantage of making the decision over hiring and appointments is that teaching and nonteaching personnel and officials can be held accountable to the LGU. It also facilitates the implementation of programs because the LCE has the authority to require compliance. Involving the LGU in hiring decisions would make this formal and legitimate.

- LCEs agreed that the consultative engagement of stakeholders in education governance was an important role of the LGU. Stakeholder engagement could serve multiple purposes, including identifying needs, generating investments and resources, and building relationships and trust to mobilize the community.

The conduct of consultative multistakeholder education summits was common among the participants. It was a means for the LGU to generate information on needs and gaps and identify solutions for issues. The education summits were also mechanisms for horizontal accountability. This provided a venue for constituents to learn about the state of education in the locality and the measures local officials took to improve learning outcomes.

The LGU could also engage with key stakeholders through other means, such as workshops with parents to change how they view their responsibilities in their children's education.

- Some participants saw value in expanding the role of LGUs in procurement, particularly in repairing and maintaining school buildings and facilities and providing instructional materials. They remarked that the process would be faster and suppliers could be held accountable for repairs if goods and services were sourced locally.
- One LCE emphasized the importance of establishing data-gathering practices and a system for tracking the attainment of desired learning outcomes at the local level. Access to basic data, especially at the barangay level, enables the LGU to better understand education problems and craft appropriate solutions.

**C. To ensure a comprehensive assessment system, participants emphasized the importance of incorporating both national and local assessments in the education system.**

Participants agreed that the education system should use a mix of both national and local assessments. National assessments are necessary to establish baselines and measure performance improvements at the system level. Moreover, publicly available,

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transparent assessment results are instrumental in mobilizing citizens to become involved in holding agencies accountable for quality outcomes. The primary purpose of developing and administering assessments at the local level is to identify gaps in student learning.

It is worth noting that several LCEs thought national assessments focused more on ranking schools, even though this practice has been phased out under the K to 12 Basic Education curricular reform. Consistent with insights from the Basic Education sub-committee consultations, this indicates a felt need at the local level for access to timely and actionable assessment information. This has arisen due to delays that have beset the implementation of national-scale standardized assessments in the past decade. Assessment results are released late and do not contain enough detail to be actionable, and formal requests have to be lodged before detailed information is provided. To address the need for timely assessment information in the interim, the DepEd Central Office now allows local assessments, but this has resulted in the proliferation of tests, which could also spawn its issues. Thus, even though local assessments could address the need for timely information, there is a need to identify which assessments should be done at the national and local levels, given their purposes.

Participants also saw value in the LGU's participation as an independent party monitoring test administration. This is motivated by prior experiences that cast doubt on the test administration's integrity. Some participants also pointed out that LGUs could validate test results by conducting on-site school visits to account for other factors (e.g., learning environment conditions) influencing student performance. Some also suggested that LGUs could even take on the function of quality-assuring schools.

**D. Consensus among participants affirmed the inclusion of the devolution of education funds in the decentralization package, aimed at expanding investments and resources at the local level.**



The participants also noted that equity should guide devolution to address the existing disparity in LGU resources. DepEd relies heavily on the LGU's SEF to finance programs in highly urbanized cities with sizable budgets. Financing then becomes a lever for the LCE to influence the direction and implementation of education services at the local level. This is not the case for LGUs with limited funds, particularly smaller municipalities with lower incomes. Limited funds will significantly constrain their ability to implement ECCD and other education programs more broadly, even if they fully tap the SEF and other sources. These LGUs need to be assured of funding so that they can focus on execution. Though the Mandanas ruling has increased the available funds to LGUs, the additional funds would still be insufficient since many health governance functions have also been devolved. To enable these LGUs to take on expanded functions in education governance and service delivery, the bulk of funds would need to be provided by the national government and supplemented by the LGUs' available funds.

**E. In the context of implementation arrangements for devolution, the varying perspectives on the appropriate governance level underscore the need for flexible and context-sensitive approaches.**

- ❑ When asked at which level of governance the devolution of education should start, LCEs had mixed responses based on their experience of political dynamics in their locality. LCEs from Iloilo favored starting at the provincial level, citing that many programs at the provincial level had successfully trickled down to the city and municipal levels. One LCE said, "If the province can prioritize education, so can the mayors" (EDCOM II, 2023, Nov 16).
- ❑ However, LCEs from Luzon expressed a preference for functions to be devolved directly to the city or municipal LGU and accountability to be lodged with the Mayor. Since localities have different contexts, lodging functions at the city or municipal level would be more responsive to needs. They also noted that localities unaligned politically with incumbent governors or congressional



*Equity should guide devolution to address the existing disparity in LGU resources.*

representatives would be shortchanged if functions and resources were devolved to the province or congressional district. Reflecting on their experiences in the devolution of health functions, LCEs noted that, like national government agencies, governors would set a menu of projects. LCEs face difficulty accessing funds if the programs their constituents need are not aligned with the provincial government's priorities.

- Regarding the components of the devolution package, LCEs remarked that before implementation, an assessment of the readiness of LGUs should be done through data gathering at the local level. This can form the basis for the capacity building of LGUs, especially for those who do not yet have the technical capacity needed for education service delivery. Capacity building could be done through regular summits where LCEs can learn about education governance from experienced and highly competent LCEs who could mentor their peers.

Though the LCE's political will has been a key driving force in localities where LGUs have taken an active role in education governance, participants recognized that reliance on the LCE's political will presents a risk to the continuity of any education reform agenda. Thus, institutional and sociopolitical arrangements must be implemented to mitigate this risk. This could include reform measures that strengthen the LSB and institutionalize a permanent staffing complement focused on education in the LGU plantilla. Participatory governance processes must also be strengthened to build a constituency that will pressure incumbent LCEs and demand continuity in education programs and quality education services. It was also deemed important to strategically identify champions who could sustain educational advocacy across political administrations.

Finally, LCEs underscored the importance of developing accountability and incentive mechanisms as part of the devolution package. There should be consequences for LGUs that do not address education issues in their localities. One approach could be tweaking the Seal of Good Local Governance indicators.



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## Next Steps for Year 2

**For year 2, the Commission will partner with the Philippine Institute for Developmental Studies (PIDS) to pursue the study on “trifocalization” as well as rightsizing for seamless and integrated education delivery.** Consultations with high-level officials of the education agencies and former key officials in the executive branch will be conducted, and inputs on SB 2017, or the proposed National Education Council Act, will also be gathered.

**The complementarity of public and private education will continue to be studied through a partnership with PIDS and the World Bank.** Research from the University of the Philippines President Edgardo J. Angara Fellowship (UP PEJA) will deepen this understanding of public and private partnerships, focusing on regulatory models, capacity, and funding and financing. The standing committee will proceed with the work with the ILO-Ph and the Delivery Associates in benchmarking existing performance and accountability practices in the Philippines against global “best practices.” Once completed, policy recommendations for strengthening performance and accountability in the Philippine education system will be developed.

**Vital for EDCOM II will be collaboration with the Department of Finance.**

Specifically, EDCOM II aims to work with the Bureau of Local Government Finance to improve the SEF monitoring mechanism and ensure proper utilization and accountability. The analysis will inform the formulation of a framework to cover (a) the proper delineation of expenses funded by the municipal, city, and provincial SEF; and (b) the mechanisms to ensure equity in the distribution of resources. Following this will be the consultations on education financing, focusing on the Boncodin Formula. DepEd's Adopt-a-School program will also be studied. The inquiry aims to have a holistic view of how funds from the private sector are being utilized in support of public schools.

**Furthermore, implementing the decentralization proof of concept in Iloilo province will commence through planning sessions with the concerned local governments.**

The Commission will also be looking into mechanisms needed for effective devolution. These include but are not limited to institutional arrangements on the equitable transfer of funds from the central to local governments and organizational structures that enable local governments to exercise coordination and oversight functions over education, such as the education units created by LGUs like Quezon City, General Santos City, Cagayan de Oro City, Muntinlupa City, and Albay. Finally, lessons learned from these activities shall be distilled into recommendations that could be considered for insertion into SB 155, or the proposed 21st Century School Boards Act.

**Another focal point of this priority area is the deconcentration of the basic education bureaucracy.**

Focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders, including current and previous executive-level officials of DepEd, will be organized to surface critical issues and identify ways forward.



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# Conclusion

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A system is defined as “a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.” **By this standard, the education system in the Philippines struggles to meet the criteria of a ‘system.’** Rather, it is better described as a sector comprised of various agencies and groups. These entities may articulate high-minded vision statements and internationally-benchmarked targets, but operations within and between agencies are circumscribed by an overly bureaucratic focus on their own mandates, unmindful of their links to other offices, bureaus, or agencies. This was exemplified in the common refrain we heard during fieldwork: “*hindi na sa amin ’yun,*” “*sila na ’yun,*” or “*bahala na sila d’un.*”

*Philippine education must shift targets from “perfect on paper” toward “doable in practice.”*

“Isomorphic mimicry” is a term used in academia to refer to the uncritical imitation of processes and systems of other governments—while missing essential elements. This is manifested in the existence of boards that are not convened, plantilla positions that exist but are manned by untrained professionals, or assessments that exist only on paper but are left unadministered due to procurement challenges. Philippine education must shift targets from “perfect on paper” toward “doable in practice.”

**Despite earnest efforts, other challenges to making education a “system” rather than merely a sector arise.** Often, these efforts have been handicapped by:

- (1) **sheer overload** (with many agencies relying on a multitude of contracts of service personnel to perform duties that have expanded beyond their respective charters)
- (2) **lack of and fear of accountability** (with many government personnel fearing audit disallowances and thus crafting policies that are often too rigid to realistically implement), and
- (3) **internal culture** (which is often adjusted to the socioeconomic and political realities of their organization).



As we have learned, coordination is not guaranteed by the establishment of councils and Task Forces, nor by legislation or department orders—it needs to arise from conditions that actually enable it. This is not practicable in a “system” where the CHED chairperson is required to chair the quarterly board meetings of 113 state universities and colleges<sup>1</sup> and when the DepEd Undersecretary for Operations—who handles all DepEd regional offices—needs to also attend to 41 other assignments, including the National Dairy Authority, the Tuberculosis National Coordinating Committee, Palarong Pambansa, and the COMELEC Advisory Council.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, EDCOM’s year 2 priorities center on the barriers that impede the agencies from success: the review of the charters of the three agencies vis-a-vis their current responsibilities and manpower complement, the study of needed reforms in procurement and audit, and assessing the efficacy of existing incentives and disincentives to actually nudge behavior within government.

**We have not invested in the manpower needed for our education system to function properly.** Our educational institutions aim to serve as pipelines that supply businesses, institutions, and government with the needed professionals—but they themselves have fallen victim to the dearth of available personnel. Our early childhood education program has no plantilla positions and no defined education pathways for prospective day care teachers and workers. Our public school teachers receive 1 nonteaching complement for every 100 teachers, while our teachers multitask to perform nonteaching roles, at the cost of instructional time. There is a talent drought in the field of educational measurement. **For the system to start behaving like a system, we must develop the professionals that can help our schools and agencies actually function.**

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Republic Act No. 8292

<sup>2</sup> DepEd Order No. 1, s. 2023

**We must also strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders, and widen their participation.** An education system is made successful not just by institutions like DepEd, CHED, and TESDA—but also by active and informed stakeholders. This includes students, parents, guardians, local government units, educational associations, academia, and civil society organizations.

It is in the interest of the system as a whole that stakeholders are able to critically engage with government, to provide ample check and balance, to refine assumptions, to suggest solutions, and to be partners in implementation. To do so, the government must provide both guidance and space for engagement, build capacity, and make certain that feedback is transmitted from the ground to the top levels of the bureaucratic ladder seamlessly, and without curation or editorialization.

**Oversight of education agencies is weak.** The challenge faced by our learners in relation to the implementation of the mother-tongue (MTB-MLE) in Key Stage 1, or the pivot in the prioritization of grantees under the Tertiary Education Subsidy (RA 10931) could have been arrested early on had there been strong oversight from either the legislative or executive branch.

These are only a couple of examples. Time and again, laws are passed and programs are implemented without sustained and strong technical oversight of its implementation. **We must study how we can establish, or strengthen existing processes to enable timely interventions.**

**Our data is dirty, incomplete, and late.** Datasets across agencies are not interoperable, and arrive too late to allow for rigorous analysis. This was echoed by the frustration of many principals and teachers on the ground: *“What assessment do we use? Ang daming pa-test, pero hindi naman namin nakukuha yung results, or kung dumating man, delayed na. Naka-graduate na yung bata. Para saan pa yun?”*

*An education system is made successful not just by institutions like DepEd, CHED, and TESDA—but also by active and informed stakeholders. This includes students, parents, guardians, local government units, educational associations, academia, and civil society organizations.*



Worse, teachers lament that repetitive data collection has eroded instructional time: *“Sa dami ng urgent data requests ng Central, Regional or Division office, hindi na kami makapagturo.”* Data flows upward urgently, and trickles down casually.

For the system to function, data must be collected and analyzed efficiently and promptly. Only then can it inform decision-making across levels: from teachers planning lessons to policymakers scrutinizing budgetary allocations. There is consensus in the Commission that addressing these impediments is a prerequisite for us in our mandate to “set specific, targeted, measurable and time-bound solutions,”<sup>3</sup> and for the system as a whole to ensure rational decision-making.

**There are no feedback loops to rationalize or update policies.**

This has resulted in outdated and ineffective policy. Already, we have brought to light overlapping policies on enterprise-based training and the corresponding tax policies intended to encourage private sector participation; the delayed inclusion of early childhood education to Special Education Fund (SEF) policies; and the hurdles faced by schools due to the outdated Boncodin formula used to determine their budget for maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE). While EDCOM will look into the urgent amendment of these policies, the Commission must also look into how it can establish a sustainable mechanism for oversight and updating of forthcoming policies.

*While EDCOM will look into the urgent amendment of these policies, the Commission must also look into how it can establish a sustainable mechanism for oversight and updating of forthcoming policies.*

**System-wide medium-term strategies must be articulated, implemented, and monitored by the 3 education agencies.**

**We could not focus on education issues in isolation, without addressing the other factors that complement or affect learning outcomes.** This requires coordination with the DOH, NNC, and DSWD—which would enable the delivery of interventions holistically. Local government units are also critical partners, on whom many of these services depend.

As we dive deep into the challenges of the sector, we recognize that educational opportunities do not exist in a vacuum, absent local and global demands. Thus, we are studying mechanisms to ensure our universities are able to support local development— in priority areas such as agricultural productivity, and Universal Healthcare—while we make sense of the country’s industrial policy directions.

**To be clear:** the success of EDCOM lies not in solving all of the problems surfaced in this report—all of us will have to work hard to do that in the years ahead. As history has shown, a single report—or even several EDCOMs—cannot fix the education system once and for all. Its purpose is to define the scale and roots of these problems clearly, and to propose a cohesive way forward as we build a working Philippine education system. By outlining the challenges and directions in these 28 priority areas, we hope to contribute significantly to unifying the sector around the actualization of the full potential of millions of Filipino learners and help them thrive in the rapidly changing world of the 21st century.



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*Its purpose is to define the scale and roots of these problems clearly, and to propose a cohesive way forward as we build a **working Philippine education system.***



# The Second Congressional Commission on Education

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# Annexes

## Early Childhood Care and Development

TESDA Program for Upskilling of CDWs from the General Appropriations Bill for 2024:

Thus, in vol. 1-A Page 1170, between lines 54 and 55, a new provision was included to reflect the same:

**Prioritizing the Upskilling of Child Development Workers (CDWS).** TESDA shall prioritize the development of a training regulation (TR) for a qualification in early childhood care and development for the existing and incoming CDWs, in coordination with the Early Childhood Care and Development Council.

## Governance and Finance

### I. Comparison of Education Statistics Between EDCOM I and Today

Note for tables: Elementary and secondary schools include those operated by SUCs/LUCs and private schools overseas.

The data presented are derived from various sources, including EDCOM I tables and figures, the Department of Education's Learner Information System as of January 10, 2023 (DepEd LIS, 2023), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority's Training Management Information System dashboard (TESDA TMIS), and the Commission on Higher Education's Fiscal Year 2024 budget presentation (CHED FY 2024 budget presentation).

#### Enrollment by Level

Level	1990-1991	2022-2023	Growth
<b>Elementary</b>	10,377,277	15,188,435	46.4%
<b>Secondary</b>	4,033,597	12,605,847	212.5%
<b>Technical-Vocational Education and Training</b>	361,736	1,309,770	262.1%
<b>Tertiary</b>	1,347,750	4,164,809	209.0%

### Number of Schools by Level

Level	1990–1991	2022–2023	Growth
Elementary	34,146	49,406	44.7%
Secondary	5,567	17,469	213.8%
Technical-Vocational Education and Training	1,262	4,572	199.9%
Tertiary	806	2,404	198.3%

Note. Tertiary figures for 2022–2023 include SUCs, satellite campuses, and LUCs.

### Public vs. Private School Enrollment

Level	1990–1991			2022–2023		
	Public	Private	%Private	Public	Private	%Private
Elementary	9,716,008	661,269	6.4%	14,079,196	1,109,239	7.3%
Secondary	2,564,045	1,469,552	36.4%	10,066,369	2,539,478	20.1%
Technical-Vocational Education and Training	50,644	311,092	86.0%			
Tertiary	233,180	1,346,758	85.2%	2,041,600	2,067,932	50.3%

Note. The EDCOM I tables and figures do not provide a disaggregation of tertiary enrollment for the SY 1990–1991. Therefore, the available disaggregated data for SY 1988–1989 is presented in lieu of the missing information.

### Number of Public vs. Private Schools

Level	1990–1991			2022–2023		
	Public	Private	%Private	Public	Private	%Private
Elementary Schools	32,472	1,674	4.9%	39,336	10,070	20.4%
Secondary Schools	3,406	2,161	38.8%	10,686	6,783	38.8%
Technical-Vocational Education and Training	336	926	73.4%	426	4,146	90.7%
Tertiary	171	635	78.8%	684	1,720	71.5%



## II. Inventory of Expenditures Charged Against the Special Education Fund

Provided in Existing Laws and Policies	Proposed in Draft Bills
<p>Local Government Code (RA 7160), and further specifications provided under DepEd-DBM-DILG JMC No. 1, s. 2017, and JMC No. 1, s. 2020</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operation and maintenance of public schools               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Payment of compensation/allowances of teachers locally-hired in elementary and secondary schools identified to have shortages</li> <li>b. Payment of salaries/wages of utility workers and security guards hired in public elementary and secondary schools that have not been provided such positions in the DepEd budget</li> <li>c. Payment of compensation/allowances of locally hired dentists and/or dental aide positions to serve in public elementary and secondary schools</li> <li>d. Utilities</li> <li>e. Communication expenses</li> <li>f. Scouting activities of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the Philippines</li> <li>g. Campus journalism programs</li> <li>h. Parents-teachers association activities</li> <li>i. Student council government activities</li> <li>j. Other extra-curricular activities that promote leadership and values</li> <li>k. Payment of dental supplies and other related expenses for the operation of dental facilities in public elementary and secondary schools</li> <li>l. Establishment of dental facilities and acquisition of apparatus and/or equipment</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Construction and repair of school buildings               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Acquisition and tilting of school sites</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Facilities and equipment               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Acquisition of laboratory, technical and similar apparatus, and information technology equipment and corollary supporting services (e.g., internet connection, maintenance, etc.)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Educational research</li> <li>5. Purchase of books and periodicals               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Purchase of library books and periodicals</li> <li>b. Purchase of instructional materials, workbooks, and textbooks</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Sports development, including sports activities at the division, district, municipal, and barangay levels</li> </ol>	<p>House Bill No. 1286 (Expanded Special Education Fund Act)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Construction, repair, and maintenance of administration offices, assembly halls, laboratories, creative learning spaces, libraries, and other facilities and improvements of public elementary and secondary schools</li> <li>2. Arts activities</li> <li>3. Acquisition and titling of land for school sites</li> <li>4. Purchase and maintenance of transport vehicles, equipment and apparatuses exclusively for school use</li> <li>5. Acquisition and/or subscription of books, periodicals, teaching aids, and instructional materials, whether physical or digital</li> <li>6. Educational research, trainings, workshops, or conferences attended by teachers or students</li> </ol> <p>House Bill No. 1530 (Special Education Fund Amendments of 2022)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Hiring and employment, including payment of salaries, allowances, and other benefits of administrative and nonteaching staff</li> <li>8. Provision of school uniforms and accessories</li> <li>9. Remuneration or honoraria of volunteer school teachers</li> </ol> <p>Senate Bill (SB) 155 (21st Century School Boards Act)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Construction, repair, and maintenance of other facilities, including workshops, laboratories, school fences, toilets, and furniture</li> <li>12. Acquisition or procurement of information and communications technology packages</li> <li>13. Education summits, community town hall meetings, discussions, and consultations on information, issues, and concerns related to education</li> <li>14. Community mapping of data related to education</li> <li>15. Formulation and implementation of locally oriented non-formal and distance education classes and training programs</li> </ol>

Provided in Existing Laws and Policies	Proposed in Draft Bills
<p>Early Years Act of 2013 (RA 10410) and specifications provided under DepEd-DBM-DILG JMC No. 1, s. 2017</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Direct services related to implementing the ECCD program such as salaries/allowances of locally-hired child development teachers and/or day care workers</li> <li>8. Organization and support of parent cooperatives to establish community-based ECCD programs</li> <li>9. Funding for the continuing professional development of ECCD public service providers</li> <li>10. Provision of facilities</li> <li>11. Payment of expenses on the operations of National Child Development Centers, including but not limited to utilities and communication</li> </ol> <p>Masustansiyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act (RA 110371)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Supplemental feeding program</li> <li>13. School-based feeding program</li> <li>14. Milk feeding program</li> <li>15. Micronutrient supplements</li> <li>16. Health examination, vaccination, and deworming</li> <li>17. Gulayan sa Paaralan</li> <li>18. Water, sanitation, and hygiene</li> <li>19. Integrated nutrition, education, behavioral transformation, and social mobilization</li> </ol> <p>Republic Act No. 11510 (Alternative Learning System Act)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. Hiring of Community ALS implementers</li> <li>21. Community literacy mapping activities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Establishment and maintenance of extension and/or remedial classes where necessary</li> <li>17. Honorarium and allowances for teachers and other nonteaching school personnel to be given in addition to their salaries for additional services rendered outside of regular school hours</li> <li>18. DepEd-related and co-curricular activities</li> <li>19. Maintenance and other operating expenses of the Local School Board, including supplies, materials, equipment, and related expenses</li> </ol>

## Regional Cooperation

<p>ASEAN commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education, including ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community engagements</li> <li>▪ ASEAN TVET Council</li> <li>▪ ASEAN Working Group on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth</li> <li>▪ PH ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Secretariat</li> </ul>	<p>APEC commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ APEC Education Network (Principal Representative)</li> <li>▪ APEC Human Resource Development Working Group</li> </ul>
<p>SEAMEO commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SEAMEO High Officials' Meeting</li> </ul> <p>Representation in the Governing Boards of various SEAMEO Regional Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early Childhood Care Education and Parenting</li> <li>▪ Educational Innovation and Technology</li> <li>▪ Education in Science and Mathematics</li> <li>▪ Lifelong Learning</li> <li>▪ Special Education</li> <li>▪ STEM Education</li> <li>▪ Language</li> <li>▪ Technical Education Development</li> <li>▪ Community Education Development</li> <li>▪ Food and Nutrition</li> <li>▪ Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel in Mathematics</li> <li>▪ Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel in Science</li> <li>▪ Regional Training Centre</li> <li>▪ Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>UNESCO commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ International Teacher Task Force (Asia Pacific Representative)</li> <li>▪ Sustainable Development Goals Steering Committee</li> <li>▪ Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 Global Network</li> <li>▪ Multisectoral Committee on International Human Development Commitments (SDG 2030 coordination mechanism lodged under NEDA SDC)</li> <li>▪ UNESCO Institute of Statistics</li> </ul> <p>Other commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ UNHCR Interagency Steering Committee on Protection of Asylum Seeker, Refugees, and Stateless Persons in the Philippines</li> <li>▪ UNDP Technical Working Group on Human Rights-Based Approach to Drug Control</li> <li>▪ Global Partnership for Education</li> <li>▪ International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3IE)</li> <li>▪ School Meals Coalition</li> <li>▪ Interagency Committee on Trade-in Services Secretariat</li> </ul>

Agencies attached to DepEd	Legal Basis
Early Childhood Care and Development Council	RA 10410
Literacy Coordinating Council	RA 10122
Philippine High School for the Arts	EO 420, s. 1990
National Book Development Board	EO 189, s. 2013
National Council for Children's Television	EO 203, s. 2003
National Museum of the Philippines	EO 610, s. 2007

### III. 7 Domains Required for 21st-Century Teacher

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#### Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

1. Content knowledge and its application within and across curriculum areas
  2. Research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning
  3. Positive use of ICT
  4. Strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy
  5. Strategies for developing critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills
  6. Mother tongue, Filipino and English in teaching and learning
  7. Classroom communication strategies
- 

#### Domain 2: Learning Environment

1. Learner safety and security
  2. Fair learning environment
  3. Management of classroom structure and activities
  4. Support for learner participation
  5. Promotion of purposive learning
  6. Management of learner behavior
- 

#### Domain 3: Diversity of Learners

1. Learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences
  2. Learners' linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds
  3. Learners with disabilities, giftedness and talents
  4. Learners in difficult circumstances
  5. Learners from indigenous groups
- 

#### Domain 4: Curriculum and Planning

1. Planning and management of teaching and learning process
  2. Learning outcomes aligned with learning competencies
  3. Relevance and responsiveness of learning programs
  4. Professional collaboration to enrich teaching practice
  5. Teaching and learning resources, including ICT
- 

#### Domain 5: Assessment and Reporting

1. Design, selection, organization, and utilization of assessment strategies
  2. Monitoring and evaluation of learner progress and achievement
  3. Feedback to improve learning
  4. Communication of learner needs, progress, and achievement to key stakeholders
  5. Use of assessment data to enhance teaching and learning practices and programs
- 

#### Domain 6: Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

1. Establishment of learning environments that are responsive to community contexts
  2. Engagement of parents and the wider school community in the educative process
  3. Professional ethics
  4. School policies and procedures
- 

#### Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development

1. Philosophy of teaching
  2. Dignity of teaching as a profession
  3. Professional links with colleagues
  4. Professional reflection and learning to improve practice
  5. Professional development goals
-




# About EDCOM II

The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) is a national Commission established through Republic Act No. 11899, tasked to undertake a comprehensive national assessment and evaluation of the performance of the Philippine education sector, and to propose transformative solutions, from 2023 to 2025. It is composed of lawmakers from both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and is guided by an Advisory Council, and assisted by the Technical Secretariat.



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