[PIFS/USP]

The status of Pacific education

A sector analysis based on internationally comparable statistics

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP)

Suva, 2021

The status of Pacific education

A sector analysis based on internationally comparable statistics

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP)

Suva, 2021

Contents

Abbreviations

Ed-DQAF	Education Data Quality Assessment Framework (UNESCO)
ECE	early childhood education
EMIS	education management information system
EQAP	Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
FEdMM	Forum Education Ministers' Meeting
FEMM	Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting
GER	gross enrolment rate
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	gender parity index
HDI	human development index
ICT	information communications and technology (ICT)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO)
NER	net enrolment rate
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PHES	Pacific Heads of Education Systems
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PSIDS	Pacific Small Island Developing States
SDG	sustainable development goal
SPC	Pacific Community
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Tables and figures

Acknowledgements

The status of Pacific education report provides an overview of the educational progress that has been made by Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). The information contained in this report has been gathered through the hard work and dedicated efforts of many individuals and organisations. This report would not have been possible without the support of the individuals and organisations who are recognised below.

We are grateful to the Forum Ministers of Education for its ongoing support of the collection of education statistics in the Pacific region. It is envisaged that the evidence presented in this report will inform policy and guide planning for improvement of education systems throughout PICTs.

The Pacific Community (SPC), through the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), is grateful to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for its financial support of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in PICTs.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the ministries and departments of education in the region. We are especially grateful to the national EMIS focal points for compiling comprehensive education data that provide insight into the status of education in the Pacific region.

We are also grateful for the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) for providing expertise and technical assistance in the processing, analysis and reporting of internationally comparable education statistics.

Thank you all for your valuable contributions to *The status of Pacific education* report.

Dr Michelle Belisle
Director
Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
Pacific Community

Foreword

Official statistics make an essential contribution to building resilient and strong democratic societies when policy decisions are based on empirical data and not on anecdote or opinion. In education, quality data is the foundation for good education policy and planning.

In the Pacific region, good quality data on education systems is not always readily available, which has significant implications for the development and monitoring of education sector policies and plans. The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) has taken on the challenge to improve the quality, availability and use of statistical information for education policy development and implementation, planning and management.

To achieve better quality data, EQAP has invested in the re-development and enhancement of education management information systems that can lead to the production of high-quality education statistics. A key strategy is to assist PICTs to implement and maintain education management information systems by supporting coordination and development of national EMIS policies, conducting data quality assessments, and providing advice and technical support on the enhancement of national education databases.

To improve the availability and use of data, EQAP has partnered with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to ensure that internationally comparable education data from PICTs is available and used for regional monitoring and policy dialogues. The intended outcome of the partnership is that PICTs publish timely and regular high-quality education data so that decision-makers at all levels can access and proactively use this data.

It is important that quality information about the status of the education in the Pacific region is widely disseminated to ensure public trust in education data and statistics. It is hoped that the publication of this report will lead to a greater confidence in the use of official education data and statistics to inform education policy and decision-making at national, regional and international levels.

Stuart Minchin
Director-General
Pacific Community

The status of Pacific education

1. Introduction

This report is the first comprehensive report of a planned series of *The status of Pacific education* reports to be produced annually by the Pacific Community's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) as part of their monitoring of the *Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) 2018–2030: Moving Towards Education 2030*.

The status of Pacific education series is primarily designed to provide the Pacific region's education ministers, their senior executives and policy and planning directors and development partners, with regular overviews of progress as it relates to education in the region alongside emerging issues and challenges that are common to most, if not all, PICTs.

This report will also serve as an important source of official statistical information that can be used by various education organisations and communities, including heads of education, education strategic planning and policy makers, school leaders, teachers, and parents who are interested in tracking the progress of national education systems in relation to the meeting of the intended outcomes at the national level of the sustainable development goals (SDG) and PacREF.

The introduction provides an overview of the regional approach to the organisation of the Pacific region's education systems, including an outline of the policy areas of the PacREF. This is followed by a brief discussion on the regional data collection mechanism, including an assessment of data availability and quality.

This main section of the report presents the comparative statistical information on the performance of the education systems in PICTs, with particular attention being paid to the four policy areas of the PacREF.

For each indicator presented in this section, the purpose and definition are briefly discussed, followed by a graphical presentation of the indicator, and a brief interpretation of the relative differences and similarities between PICTs. The implications of the indicator for regional planning are also explored.

The final section describes the common strengths and shared challenges of Pacific region education systems as illustrated by time-series graphs and country vignettes, which show the regional trends in key indicators over the last five years. This is followed by an explanation of how regional initiatives will collectively respond to these challenges and raise the quality of the Pacific region's school systems.

The annex (Annex 1) provides a list of PacREF indicators that will be used to track education progress across the Pacific region over the foreseeable future. These indicators also include global and thematic indicators that are used to monitor the SDG 4 goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all

1.1 Regionalism in Pacific education

Although each of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) has its own rich and diverse background, together, they share many of the same development challenges[1]. *The Framework for Pacific Regionalism*, which was developed in 2014, seeks to address these challenges through cooperation and collaboration among PICTs.

By recognising the importance of the development of human resources in supporting sustainable development, economic ministers of the Pacific region agreed at a Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting (FEMM) in 1999 to prioritise education in national development planning and budgeting. In May 2001, a Forum Education Ministers' Meeting (FEdMM) was convened to consider issues related to human resource development in the Pacific region. The *Pacific Education for All 2015: Review* further increased emphasis on basic education. Following a recommendation from this meeting, the Pacific Forum Leaders called for a Forum Education Ministers' Meeting.

Over the two decades since then, the FEdMM has become an effective mechanism for discussing education policy issues at the regional level. In 2001, FEdMM adopted the *Forum Basic Education Action Plan* (FBEAP), which is a document that set out the vision, goals and strategies for the future of basic education in the Pacific region and reaffirmed its commitment to the *Dakar Framework for Action* and the six Education for All (EFA) goals. In 2009, at the seventh FEdMM, a revised regional agenda was endorsed and launched as the *Pacific Education Development Framework* (PEDF). Reviews of these programmes revealed that, despite their intentions, the region's main challenges had not been adequately addressed over the course of their implementation.

In 2015, the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) began to work towards shaping a more comprehensive longer-term and calibrated programme to raise educational quality across the region. In doing so, the PHES partnered with the regionally based international education agencies to develop a new framework – *Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF)*. This framework was endorsed by FEdMM in 2018 and formally aligned to the timeline established for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achievement of the SDGs.

The PacREF provides a means for identifying and understanding similarities and differences across the Pacific region. It offers organising mechanisms for sector planning, reporting and collaboration, and it provides development partners with an understanding of where the Pacific region's resourcing priorities lie. It supports activities that are politically feasible and technically sound and that have a high probability of producing the desired outcomes. PacREF is driven by six principles, as follows:

1. Regionalism and mutually beneficial partnerships
2. Application of evidence to policy and practice
3. Efficiency in the use of resources
4. Equity in access and opportunity
5. High-quality and relevant inputs
6. Sustainable and high-quality outcomes

All 15 of the Pacific's three island groupings are participating in the PacREF: (1) Melanesia (Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu); (2) Micronesia (Federate States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru and Palau); and (3) Polynesia (Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu).

[1] All of the PSIDS have small but growing populations, limited resources, and fragile environments, and are remote, isolated and susceptible to natural disasters, the impacts of climate change, and external shocks. Most are also dependent on international trade and external financing.

1.2 Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF)

The four key policy areas of the PacREFare: Quality and Relevance; Learning Pathways; Student Outcomes and Wellbeing; and the Teaching Profession (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2018). Each key policy area is elaborated below.

Policy Area 1: Quality and Relevance

Policy Objective: High-quality, relevant programmes are provided for learners at all levels of education.
Goal: All learners are provided with a safe and supportive environment, within which they are offered high-quality learning opportunities that are meaningful, valuable, inclusive and future-focused.
Outcomes:

- Curriculum and programmes are embedded in the Pacific context that reflect Pacific values, cultures, traditional knowledge and skills that draw on the land that we live and exist upon and the ocean that surrounds and bind us all.
- Learning is inclusive of cognitive and non-cognitive development.
- Curriculum and programmes, with appropriate pedagogy are inclusive, rights-based, promote gender equality, flexible and responsive to innovation and change, and are adaptable to new learning opportunities.
- Quality learning environment that supports learning at all levels of education.

Policy Area 2: Learning Pathways

Policy Objective: Learners' needs are met through a broad range of programmes and delivery modalities.
Goal: All learners have equal access to multiple and seamless pathways and modalities of learning that will allow them to meet their full potential.
Outcomes:

- An enabling policy environment, which is rights-based with appropriate resourcing, for increased school-based decision-making and flexibility in the facilitation of learning.
- Our most vulnerable learners fully participate in a wide range of learning.
- Our youngest learners (pre-schoolers) are prepared to engage in formal schooling.
- Linked pathways between levels of schooling and beyond.

Policy Area 3: Student Outcomes and Wellbeing

Policy Objective: Learners at all levels of education achieve their full potential.
Goal: All learners acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attributes to enable them to contribute to their families, communities and nation building.
Outcomes:

- Increased percentages of learners achieve expected levels of literacy and numeracy at all levels of education but particularly by the end of the primary cycle.
- Improved participation and success rates at all levels, especially in early childhood care and education, secondary education and technical and vocational education and training.
- Programmes developed and implemented that strengthen cognitive, non-cognitive and social skills in young people, recognising "Pacific literacies", ensuring their readiness for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in life.

Policy Area 4: Teaching Profession

Policy Objective: The teaching profession is supported and empowered through opportunities for continuous development, shared understanding and accountability.
Goal: Competent, qualified and certified teachers and school leaders who are current in their professional knowledge and practice. Teachers are supported, engaged, effective and committed to the holistic development of their students.
Outcomes:

- All teachers and school leaders in the Pacific are qualified and skilled certified professionals who are able to demonstrate their competencies against approved standards.
- All teachers and school leaders are supported, through a range of modalities, in developing new skills and knowledge to create better outcomes for students.
- The teaching profession holds status in the Pacific leading to parents and the community having unreserved confidence in teachers and schools.

1.3 Data sources

Data collection

Over the last six years, SPC and UIS have collaborated to develop a regional data collection mechanism as a single point of entry for national education data from PICTs. The intention of the regional data collection mechanism is to reduce the response burden that is placed on small PICTs by data requests from regional and international agencies. The mechanism is used to provide the required data for the calculation of education indicators for both regional and international reporting.

It is expected that the regional data collection mechanism will result in the following:

- Increased reporting of education statistics by all PICTs through the collection of quality and timely data from EMIS.
- Improved response rate to international data collections, including the provision of data on sector-wide enrolments, teachers and institutions for the UIS Survey of Formal Education.
- Enhanced analysis of household surveys and population censuses in the Pacific region to obtain data for reporting on relevant education indicators.

A key component of the regional data collection mechanism is the UIS Survey of Formal Education, which collects data for the calculation of SDG 4 global and thematic indicators. These indicators are also used in the regional reporting for progress toward achieving SDG 4 targets as well as monitoring the PacREF. [2]

PICTs, as owners of the education data, approve the release of official statistics for publication in regional and international databases and publications. PICTs report officially approved education data to regional and international development partners through the UIS data centre and SPC Pacific data hub. Development partners use the education indicators to monitor and evaluate education progress of the SDG and PacREF. Figure 1.3.1 shows the number of data submissions from PICTs to UIS over the last seven years.

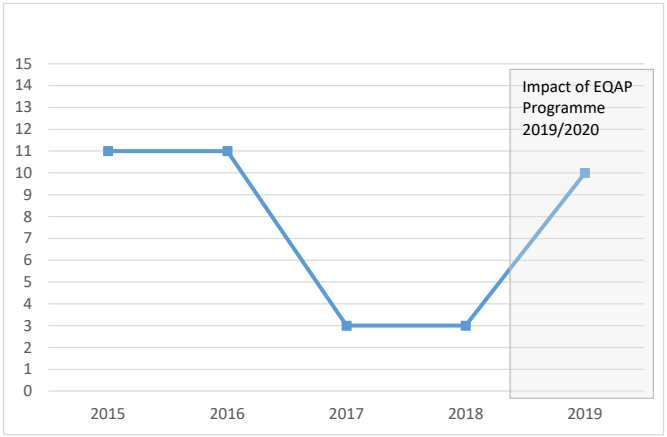

Figure 1.3.1. Responses to UIS ED/A Questionnaire

For the 2019 school year, ten PICTs submitted UIS ED/A questionnaires which collects data on students and teachers at ISCED levels 0–4. This includes Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu.

[2] A list of relevant SDG indicators for each of the PacREF priorities are listed in Annex 1.

Data quality

As shown by data quality assessments, many PICTs face challenges in collecting and producing quality and timely education statistics. These challenges include the following: little coordination in the collection of education data across the sector; delays in data collection due to increased data requirements; long periods of time spent on data entry; inadequate statistical processes to ensure data quality; low level of technical capacity to produce and disseminate statistics; and lack of urgency and attitude in producing and disseminating statistics.

Like many nations, PICTs value timely, high-quality data for planning and decision-making and recognise the importance of the availability, timeliness and quality of the education statistics that they use for their planning. There are increasing efforts to disseminate education data in order to ensure accountability and value for money. In education and beyond, data quality improvement plans are essential tools for Pacific region governments.

Over the last five years, PICTs have made varying degrees of progress in their development of EMIS, which has been aided by SPC, and UIS. Technical support for EMIS development is also provided by bilateral (Australia) and/or multilateral partners, including Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Most countries have functional EMIS systems, and some countries are exploring systems with new features.

Six countries have undertaken data quality assessments using the Data Quality Assessment Framework on education [Ed-DQAF][3], which have recommended improvements to EMIS environments, processes and outputs. UIS is collaborating with SPC to support PICTs to implement their data quality improvement plans, including improving EMIS technologies, providing training on statistical processes and providing technical assistance with statistical outputs (e.g. education statistics reports).

Data availability

At the national level, the priority PacREF and SDG 4 indicators are primarily published in education statistics reports and others can be derived from population census and household survey data. These data are used to illustrate the status of national education systems in the form of infographics. The following countries publish regular statistical reports: Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. This data will be used alongside regional comparative data to report on progress with respect to SDG 4 and PacREF.

Regional comparative data on key education indicators are mostly derived from the UIS data centre which are published biannually on the UIS website for the latest completed school year. Some population-based indicators are derived from published national population and household survey reports. Educational assessment indicators for literacy and numeracy are obtained from national and regional Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) reports.

To improve the availability of regional education statistics, EQAP is working with the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) to provide internationally comparable statistical data through the Pacific Data Hub, based on UIS data provided by all PICTs. Where data is not available for the most recent

[3] The Ed-DQAF assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the education statistical system, based on data quality, and provides a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of education data by comparing a country's practices with international standards.

completed school year, the latest year's data is used as an estimate. Table 1.3.1 shows the years for which indicator data is available from the UIS database.

Table 1.3.1 PacREF priority indicator availability in UIS database 2015–2019. Source: http://data.uis.unesco.org

Country/Territory	School data Latest year	School data No. years	Student data Latest year	Student data No. years	Teacher data Latest year	Teacher data No. years
Cook Islands	2019	2	2019	3	2019	2
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	-	0	2019	2	2019	2
Fiji	-	0	2019	3	-	0
Kiribati	-	0	2017	3	2017	2
Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)	2019	1	2019	2	-	0
Nauru	2019	1	2019	2	2019	2
Niue	2019	2	2019	1	2016	2
Palau	-	0	2014	0	-	0
Papua New Guinea (PNG)	-	0	2016	1	-	0
Samoa	2019	4	2019	5	-	0
Solomon Islands*	-	0	2018	2	2016	4
Tokelau	2019	1	2019	2	2019	1
Tonga	-	0	2015	1	2015	1
Tuvalu	2019	1	2019	3	2019	3
Vanuatu	-	0	2015	1	2015	1

* 2019 data submitted to UIS after deadline for publication.

Data interpretation

A graphical presentation is made for each indicator discussed in the report. A bar chart represents the magnitude of the indicator for each PICT, mostly as a percentage (%), and a circle represents the extent of gender parity in the form of an index (GPI). A circle between the two horizontal bars indicates relative parity, above the bar indicates a larger indicator value for females, and below the bar a larger indicator value for males.

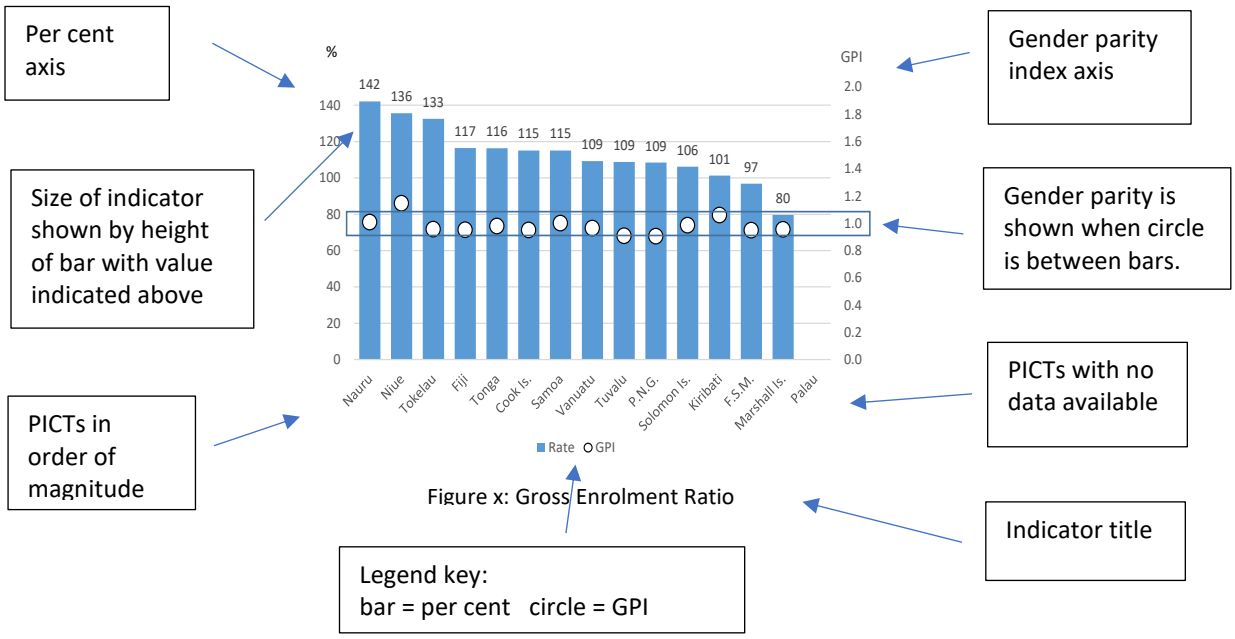

Figure 1.3.2 A guide to understanding the bar chart

2. Education quality

The number of out-of-school children and over-age students are indicators of the quality and relevance of education, as are indicators of the availability of school facilities in the Pacific region.

2.1 Out-of-school children

The purpose of the out-of-school rate is to identify the size of the population in the official age range for the given level of education of those who are not enrolled in school so that they can be better targeted and appropriate policies can be put in place to ensure that they have access to education. The rate is defined as children and young people in the official age range for the given level of education who are not enrolled in primary, secondary or higher levels of education.

The higher the number of out-of-school children and adolescents, the greater the need to focus on improving better access to education. Some children have never been in school or may never enrol as late entrants. Other children may have initially enrolled but dropped out before reaching the intended age of completion of the given level. Note that a limitation with the indicator is that inconsistencies between enrolment and population data from different sources may result in inaccurate estimates of out-of-school children and adolescents.

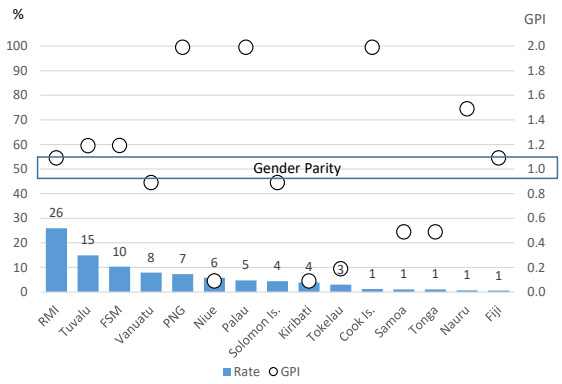

Figure 2.1.1 Out-of-school rate in primary education

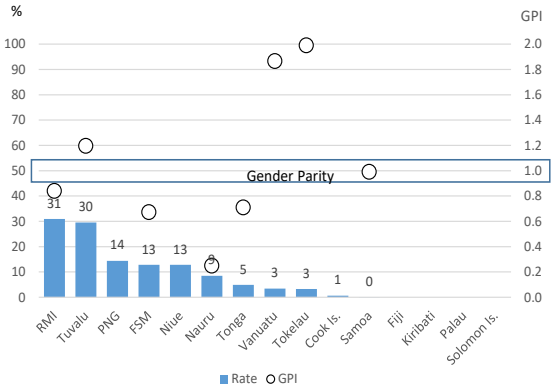

Figure 2.1.2 Out-of-school rate in lower secondary education

Most countries have low rates of out-of-school children with rates less than 10 per cent not attending primary school (Figure 2.1.1) and less than 15 per cent not attending secondary school (Figure 2.1.2). However, it should be noted that even a small rate in large countries could represent a large number of out-of-school children and, conversely, in some small countries the rate may be large but the absolute numbers may be relatively small. For example, 94 per cent of the out-of-school children are located in Melanesian countries compared with less than five per cent in Micronesian countries. At both primary and secondary levels, there is a gender disparity in the proportion of boys versus girls who are out-of-school, with some countries having more girls than boys not attending school and others with more boys than girls out-of-school.

The higher out-of-school rates for some countries have significant policy implications for the development of education in those sub-regions. For example, a recent household survey in PNG estimated that almost 30 per cent of children of primary school age were not attending school – especially in rural areas. There is a need for further investigation into the reasons for children not attending school, such as research into the barriers to accessing education, including reasons for dropping out of school. In PNG, for example, almost half of all children from poor households were not attending school.

2.2 Over-age students

The purpose of the over-age indicator measures progress towards ensuring all girls and boys complete a full cycle of nine years of quality primary and secondary education and achieve at least minimum levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy by the end of compulsory schooling. Children may be over-age for a grade or year level because they started school late and/or they have repeated one or more previous grades/year levels.

The indicator is defined as the percentage of students in primary and lower-secondary education who are at least two years above the intended age for their grade or year level. The intended age for a given grade/year level is the age at which students would enter the grade/year level if they had started school at the official primary entrance age, had studied full-time and had progressed without repeating or skipping a grade/year level.

Nine years of primary and secondary education completed by the age of fifteen years is becoming an international norm. It also means young people will complete basic education before reaching the minimum age for work. Over-age progression and significant repetition are associated with lower levels of student learning achievement. A low value of this indicator will show that the majority of students start school on time and progress with minimum levels of grade repetition.

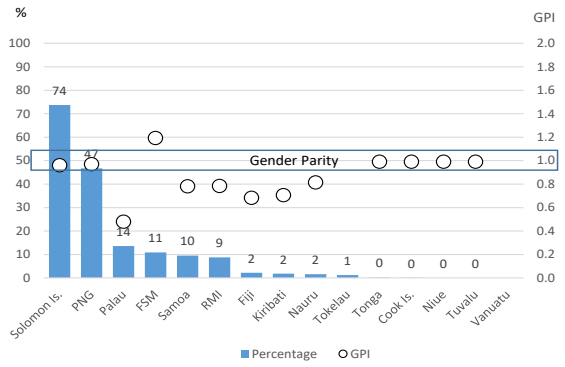

Figure 2.2.1 Over-age students in primary education

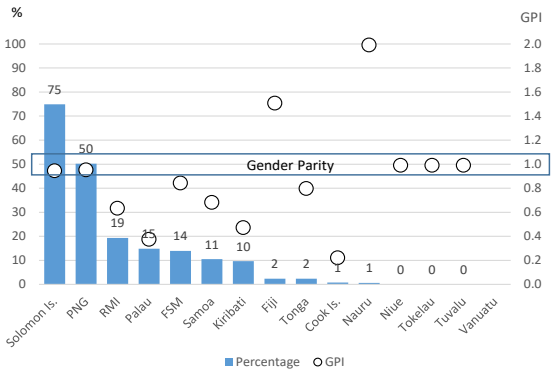

Figure 2.2.2 Over-age students in lower secondary education

The Melanesian sub-region has the largest percentage of over-age children, both at primary and lower-secondary levels (Figures 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). For example, three-quarters of students in primary and lower-secondary education are over the official school age for year level in the Solomon Islands, as are half of all students in PNG. Between 10 and 15 per cent of elementary school students are over-age for their grade in Micronesian countries in the northern Pacific sub-region. While there are equal proportions of over-age boys and girls enrolled in primary and lower-secondary grades/year levels in Melanesian countries, in almost all other countries, more boys than girls are over-age at both primary and secondary levels.

The high proportions of over-age students in Melanesian countries have significant policy implications for the development of education in the sub-region. There is a need for further investigation into the reasons for children not attending school at the correct age, such as research into the barriers to education participation, including reasons for starting school at an older age and repetition of grades/year levels. The analysis should assess the equality of educational participation for vulnerable populations with reference to urban/rural location of schools, socio-economic status and disability.

2.3 School facilities

The school facility indicators measure the access in schools to basic services and facilities that are necessary for ensuring a safe and effective learning environment for all students. The indicator is defined as the percentage of primary and secondary schools with access to a specific facility or service. This includes access to computers and internet for pedagogical purposes and a safe source of drinking water and basic sanitation.

Computers for pedagogical use are those that are used to support course delivery or independent teaching and learning needs. Computers include the following types: desktop computers, laptops, notebooks and tablets. Basic drinking water is defined as a functional improved drinking water source on or near the premises and water points accessible to all users during school hours. Basic sanitation facilities are defined as functional improved sanitation facilities that are separated for males and females on or near the premises.

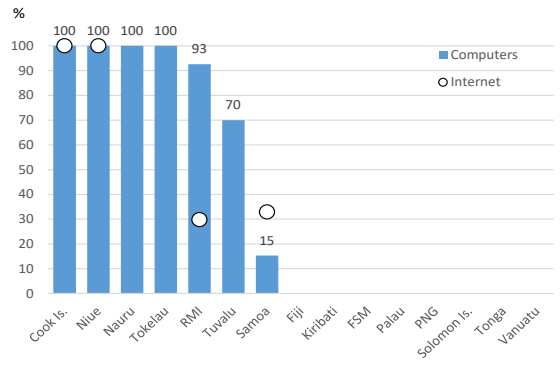

Figure 2.3.1 Primary schools with access to computers and internet

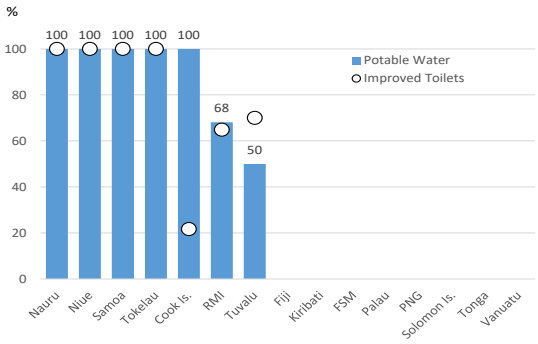

Figure 2.3.2 primary schools with access to basic drinking water and sanitation

Only half of PICTs reported data on their primary school facilities for information communications and technology (ICT) (Figure 2.3.1) and basic drinking water and sanitation (Figure 2.3.2). The lack of regular reporting on school facilities by many countries is a significant issue for monitoring progress towards improving the quality of schooling in the Pacific region.

Of those countries that reported data on ICT facilities, most indicated that all primary schools had access to computers for teaching purposes, though few had access to the internet. Given the fast-changing environment for ICT in education, there is an urgent need to monitor the use of ICT in the classroom, especially during the COVID-19 restrictions and the subsequent economic recovery. The number of students per computer is an indicator that could be calculated from data provided by PICTs.

The lack of access to basic sanitation in Micronesian countries has significant policy implications for the development of education in the sub-region. There is a need for further investigation into whether the lack of functional gender-separated toilets in schools presents a barrier to education participation – particularly for girls. Some countries are now using EMIS as a tool for gathering information on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). The analysis should also assess the equality of educational participation for vulnerable populations with reference to urban/rural location of schools, socio-economic status and disability.

3. Learning pathways

Net enrolment rate (NER) and gross enrolment ratio (GER) are SDG 4 thematic indicators of student participation at different levels of education and provide a measure of the extent to which students are accessing learning pathways in early childhood, primary and secondary education.

3.1 Participation in early childhood education

The purpose of the participation rate for one year before the official primary school age is to measure children's exposure to organised learning activities in this year. The indicator is defined as the percentage of children in the given age range who participate in one or more organised learning programmes, including programmes that offer a combination of education and care. The age range varies by country depending on the official age for entry to primary education.

A high value of the indicator shows a high degree of participation in organised learning immediately before the official entrance age to primary education. However, participation in learning programmes in the early years is not full-time for many children, meaning that exposure to learning environments outside of the home will vary in intensity.

The purpose of the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in early childhood education is to show the general level of participation in pre-primary education. The indicator is defined as the total enrolment in pre-primary education regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the population of the official age for pre-primary education.

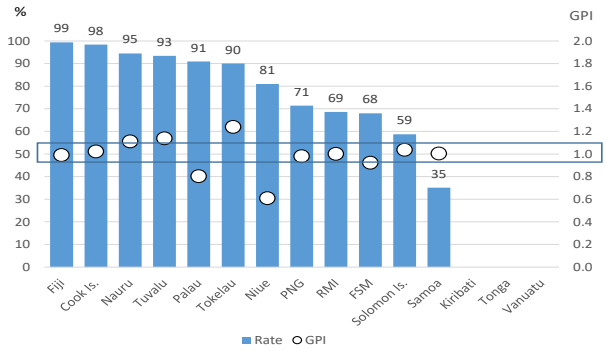

Figure 3.1.1 Participation rate one year before official primary age

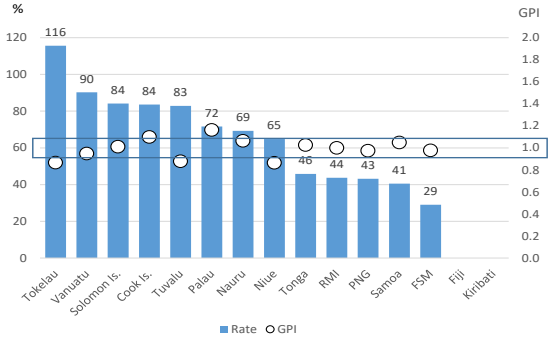

Figure 3.1.2 Gross enrolment ratio in early childhood education

Half of the reporting countries have a high level of participation in pre-primary education with more than 90 per cent of children attending early childhood education in the year before they start school (Figure 3.1.1). This includes Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Tokelau and Tuvalu. Five countries have a high level of enrolment in early childhood education with a gross enrolment rate above 80 per cent (Figure 3.1.2). This includes: Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Overall gender parity (or close to) has been achieved for gross enrolment ratios, but there is a significant gender disparity in the net enrolment rates.

The high level of participation in early childhood education has significant implications for policy and planning in the region. There is a need for further study into the extent to which attendance at early childhood education contributes to better student outcomes, such as proficiency in literacy and numeracy, as well as psychosocial, cognitive, physical and behavioural skills, at primary school. The analysis should assess the equality of student outcomes for vulnerable populations with reference to urban/rural location of schools, socio-economic status and disability.

3.2 Participation in primary education

The purpose of the primary net enrolment rate (NER) is to show the extent of coverage in primary education. It is defined as the enrolment of the official age group for primary education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

The purpose of the primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) is to show the general level of participation in primary education. It indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of the official age for primary education. It can also be a complementary indicator to NER by indicating the extent of over-aged and under-aged enrolment. It is defined as the total enrolment in primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.

A high GER generally indicates a high degree of participation, whether the students belong to the official age group or not, and a high NER denotes a high degree of coverage for the official school-age population. The theoretical maximum value is 100 per cent, though GER often exceeds 100 per cent due to enrolment of under- and over-age students. A GER value approaching or exceeding 100 per cent indicates that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-age population, but it does not indicate the proportion already enrolled. The achievement of a GER of 100 per cent is therefore a necessary but not sufficient condition for enrolling all eligible children in school.

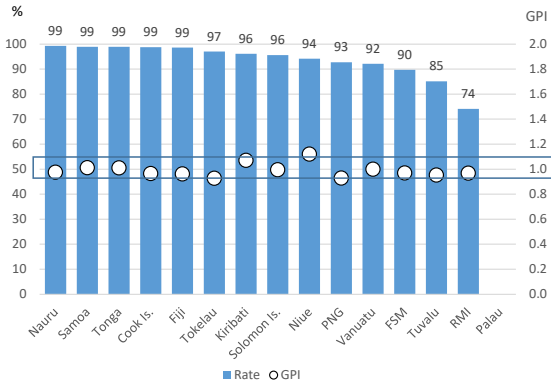

Figure 3.2.1 Total net enrolment rate in primary education

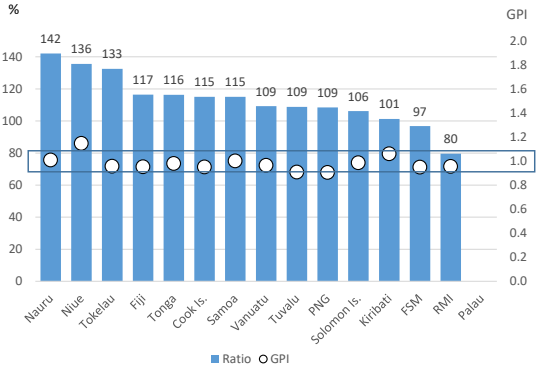

Figure 3.2.2 Gross enrolment ratio in primary education

Apart from the RMI and Tuvalu, more than 90 per cent of primary school-aged children in the Pacific region are enrolled in primary education, with almost full enrolment in Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Samoa and Tonga (Figure 3.2.1). Most countries have a gross enrolment ratio above 100 per cent, indicating that there are more children enrolled despite the official primary enrolment age (Figure 3.2.2). This is particularly evident in the small island states of Nauru, Niue and Tokelau, but this may be due to the relatively small numbers of students that are enrolled. In general, there is parity in the enrolment rates of boys and girls in primary education across the region.

The relatively low proportions of students attending primary schools in some Micronesian countries have significant policy implications for the development of education in the sub-region. There is a need for further investigation into the reasons for children not attending primary school, such as research into the barriers to education participation, including reasons for not being enrolled or dropping out of primary school. The analysis should assess the equality of participation in education for vulnerable populations with reference to urban/rural location of schools, socio-economic status, ethnicity and disability.

3.3 Participation in secondary education

The purpose of the net enrolment ratio (NER) indicator at secondary level is to show the extent of coverage in upper-secondary education. It is defined as the enrolment of the official age group in upper-secondary education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population. Upper-secondary education refers to the final stage of secondary education that prepares students for tertiary education and/or providing skills relevant to employment.

The purpose of the gross enrolment ratio (GER) is to show the general level of participation in secondary education. It is defined as the total enrolment in both lower- and upper-secondary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to secondary education in a given school year.

A high GER generally indicates a high degree of participation in secondary education regardless of students' age. A GER value approaching or exceeding 100 per cent indicates that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-age population, but it does not indicate the proportion already enrolled. The achievement of a GER of 100 per cent is therefore a necessary but not sufficient condition for enrolling all eligible children in school.

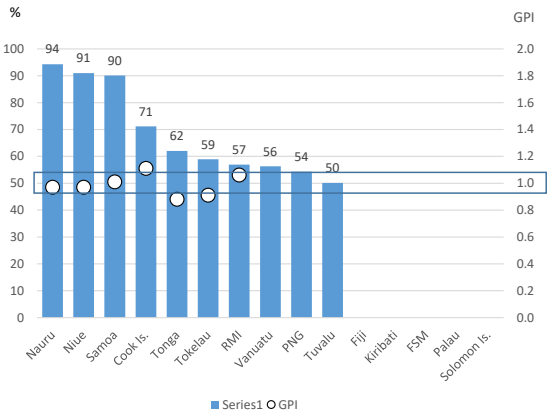

Figure 3.3.1 Total net enrolment rate in upper secondary education

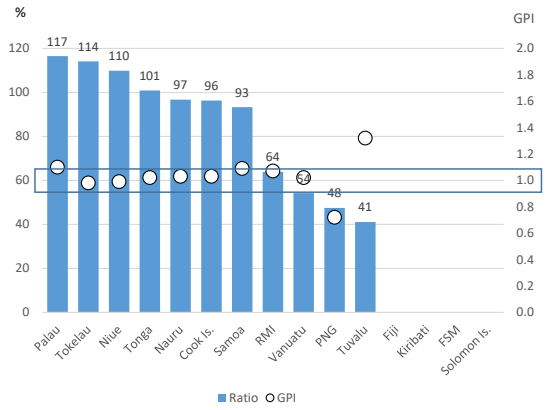

Figure 3.3.2 Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education

In general, the Polynesian sub-region has the largest enrolment of students in upper-secondary education compared with the population of official age for that level of education (Figure 3.3.1). More than 90 per cent of the eligible school-aged population is enrolled in upper-secondary school in Nauru, Niue and Samoa, and just over half are enrolled for the other reporting countries. Around half of the countries have a GER above 90 percent, indicating there is a relatively large number of over-age students enrolled in secondary schools (Figure 3.3.2). In two countries, there is a substantial gender gap in the enrolment rates, with more girls enrolled in secondary education in Tuvalu and more boys in PNG.

The relatively low proportions of students attending secondary schools in some Melanesian countries have significant policy implications for the development of education in the sub-region. There is a need for further investigation into the reasons for children not attending secondary school, such as research into the reasons for inequality in access to and participation in secondary education. For example, there is evidence from a recent household survey *(National Statistical Office 2019)* that there is a large disparity in access to lower- and upper-secondary education for girls from rural and poor households.

4. Student outcomes

The percentage of Year 6 students meeting expected standards in literacy and numeracy is a proxy indicator for the percentage of children at the end of primary education who achieve at least a minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics. The gross intake ratio to the last grade is a proxy indicator of completion rate for primary and lower-secondary education.

4.1 Proficiency in literacy and numeracy

The purpose of the proficiency in literacy and numeracy indicator is to provide a direct measure of the learning outcomes achieved in the two subject areas at the end of primary education. It is defined as the percentage of children and young people in Year 6 of primary education who achieve at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics. Due to the lack of disaggregated data, the indicator is based on the total literacy and numeracy scores from the 2018 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) and national Standardised Tests of Achievement.

Minimum proficiency level is the benchmark of basic knowledge in a domain measured through learning assessments. It is defined as achieving at or above the expected level for the year level that is being assessed. Students reaching the benchmark are able to apply basic knowledge in a variety of situations, similar to the idea of minimum proficiency. Currently, there are no common standards validated by the international community or countries.

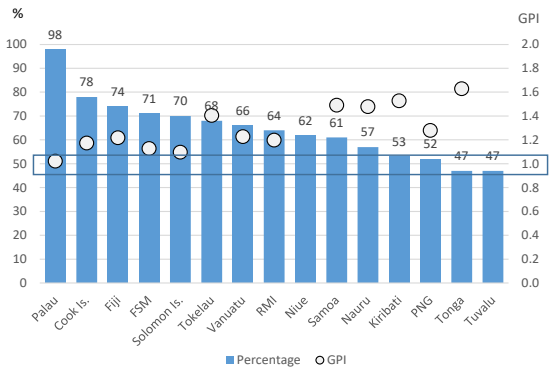

Figure 4.1.1 Literacy proficiency in primary education

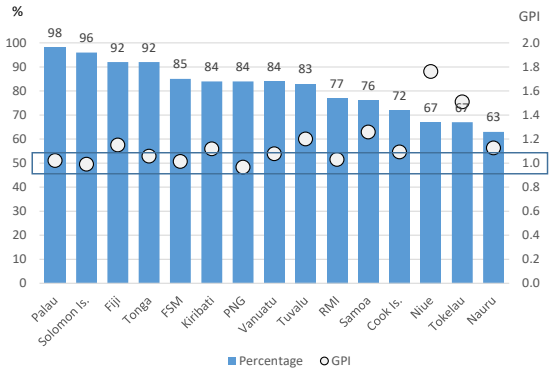

Figure 4.1.2 Numeracy proficiency in primary education

While almost all Palauan students achieved the expected proficiency levels in both literacy and numeracy, other countries achieved lower results, ranging from less than half of students assessed as proficient in literacy in Tonga and Tuvalu to more than three-quarters of students in the Cook Islands (Figure 4.1.1). The proportions of students who achieved proficiency in numeracy was relatively higher, ranging from half of the students in Tokelau to more than 90 per cent of students in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga (Figure 4.1.2). On average, significantly more girls than boys achieved proficiency in literacy, and, to lesser extent, more girls than boys also achieved proficiency in numeracy.

The low proportions of students achieving proficiency in literacy and numeracy at the end of primary school have significant policy implications for the development of education in the sub-region. There is a need for further investigation into the reasons for students not achieving the expected learning outcomes, such as research into the factors affecting success at school, including the alignment of the curriculum to expected learning outcomes and the quality of teaching practices. The analysis should assess the equity of learning outcomes in primary education for students with disabilities.

4.2 Completion of schooling

The gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary education is a proxy measure of primary completion. It reflects how the impact of policies on access to and progression through the early grades of each level of education impact the final grade of that level. It also indicates the capacity of the education system to accommodate completion for the population of the intended entrance age to the last grade of the given level of education. It assumes that students entering the last grade for the first time will eventually complete the grade and hence the given level of education.

The indicator is defined as the total number of new entrants into the last grade of primary education or lower-secondary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the intended entrance age to the last grade of primary education or lower-secondary education. The intended entrance age to the last grade is the age at which students would enter the grade if they had started school at the official primary entrance age, had studied full-time and had progressed without repeating or skipping a grade.

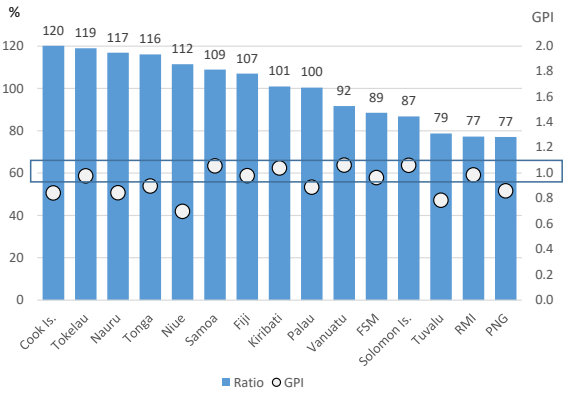

Figure 4.2.1 Gross intake ratio to last grade of primary education

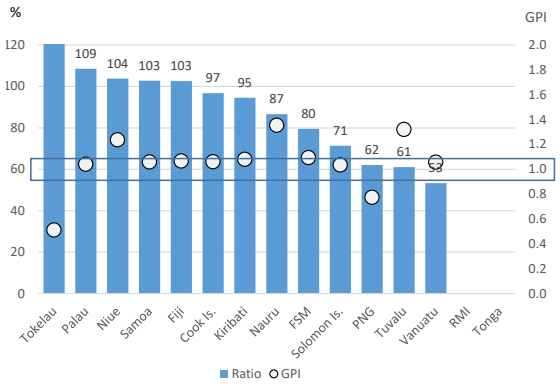

Figure 4.2.2 Gross intake ratio to last grade of lower secondary education

Overall, a high ratio of students is enrolled in the last grade of primary and lower-secondary education in relation to the official age for entry into the last grade (Figures 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). However while a high ratio indicates a high degree of primary and lower-secondary education completion, the ratio can exceed 100 per cent due to over-aged and under-aged children who enter primary school late/early and/or repeat grades. Fewer students complete primary and lower-secondary schooling in RMI, PNG and Tuvalu than other countries. With a few exceptions, there is an overall gender parity for completion of primary education, though this is less so for lower-secondary education, where more girls than boys complete school.

The lower completion rate for lower-secondary education has significant policy implications for the development of education in the Pacific region, especially for the Melanesian sub-region. There is a need for further investigation into the reasons for students not completing secondary education, such as research into the factors affecting access and participation in secondary schools. While there is evidence from a recent household survey (Papua New Guinea DHS 2016–2018) that there is a large disparity in the completion of schooling between young people who live in urban and rural areas, and/or from rich or poor households, further analysis should also assess the extent to which ethnicity and disability affect the completion of secondary education.

4.3 Educational attainment

The purpose of the educational attainment indicator is to measure the human capital of PICTs. According to the World Bank, "human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realise their potential as productive members of society". The indicator is a key component of the Human Development Index (HDI) published by UNDP.

The indicator is defined as the cumulative distribution of the population of a given age group according to the minimum level of education completed. This indicator is usually presented for age groups of at least 25 years of age and older in order to ensure that the majority of the population has completed their education. The indicator measures, for each level of education, the percentage of the population that completes at least that level of education.

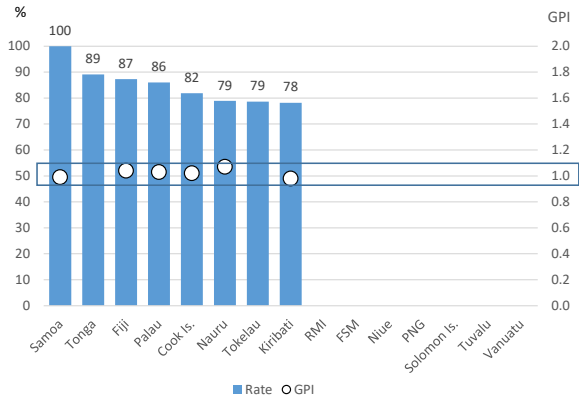

Figure 4.3.1 Education attainment of population aged 25+ for lower secondary education

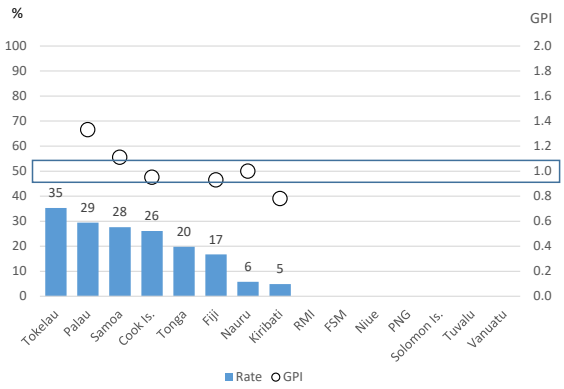

Figure 4.3.2 Education attainment of population aged 25+ for post-secondary education

Figures 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 show the levels of lower-secondary and post-secondary education attainment for countries that have had a recent population census. Most people in the Pacific region aged 25 years and over have completed at least a lower-secondary education, but fewer adults have completed post-secondary education, such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) or tertiary education. For example, while all adults in Samoa had completed the equivalent of Year 8 education, less than 30 per cent had completed a post-secondary qualification. In general there is gender parity for lower-secondary education attainment, though there is disparity in post-secondary attainment in some countries.

Higher levels of attainment in a population are associated with greater personal, household or national wealth and economic growth. The greater the level of attainment of a person, the greater their earning potential. Persons with higher attainment are also assumed to be better equipped to make well-informed decisions; for example, about their personal health or the environment. High levels of attainment in a population are thus assumed to be correlated with sustainable development.

Based on recent population censuses and household surveys, further research can be undertaken into the extent to which higher educational attainment relates to greater household and personal income in the Pacific region, such as the type of occupation and level of salaries and wages for different levels of attainment. For example, in Kiribati evidence from a recent household survey (Kiribati National Statistics Office 2019) suggests that people from wealthy households are more likely to complete secondary and higher education qualifications than those from poorer households.

5. Teaching profession

The proportion of trained and qualified teachers and student–teacher ratios in primary and secondary education are SDG 4 thematic indicators of the quality of the teaching profession in the Pacific region.

5.1 Trained teachers

Trained teachers play a key role in ensuring the quality of education that is provided. Ideally, all teachers should receive adequate, appropriate and relevant pedagogical training in order to teach at the relevant level of education. This indicator measures the share of the teaching workforce that is pedagogically trained. This indicator is defined as the percentage of teachers in primary and secondary education who have received at least the minimum of organised pedagogical teacher training (pre-service and in-service), which is required for teaching at the relevant level.

A high value indicates that students are being taught by teachers who are pedagogically well-trained to teach. It is important to note that national minimum training requirements can vary widely from one country to the next. This variability between countries lessens the usefulness of global tracking because the indicator would only show the percentage of teachers that reach national standards, but not whether teachers in different countries have similar levels of training. Further work would be required if a common standard for teacher training is to be applied across countries.

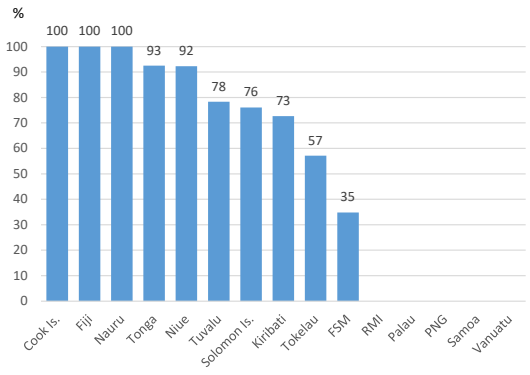

Figure 5.1.1 Trained teachers in primary education

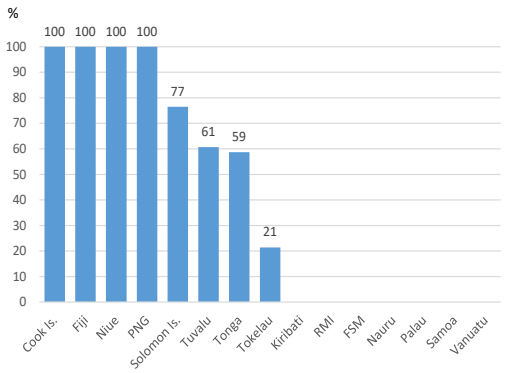

Figure 5.1.2 Trained teachers in secondary education

Only two PICTs, Cook Islands and Fiji, have all teachers in their workforce that are trained to teach in both primary and secondary education (Figure 5.1.1 and 5.1.2). All primary teachers in Nauru and more than 90 per cent of primary teachers in Niue and Tonga are trained teachers, and all secondary teachers in PNG and Niue are trained to teach at secondary level, though it is uncertain whether all are qualified to do so. Only a third of teachers in the FSM were trained teachers in primary education, and only one in five teachers in Tokelau are trained at the secondary level.

The relatively low levels of trained teachers in some PICTs have significant policy implications for the development of education in the Pacific region, especially for the Melanesian sub-region and small island states. There is a need for further investigation into pre-service and in-service training of teachers within the Pacific region, such as research into the factors affecting the professional competencies of teachers in the classroom, including whether or not teachers are receiving training in current teaching and learning practices. The analysis should assess the equity of class sizes within the education sector with specific reference to the urban/rural location of schools, school region/district, and socio-economic status of communities.

5.2 Qualified teachers

Qualified teachers play a key role in ensuring that high-quality education is provided. Ideally, all teachers should be academically well-qualified in the subject(s) they are expected to teach. This indicator measures the share of the teaching workforce that is academically qualified according to national standards. It is important to note that national academic qualification requirements can vary between each country, which may lessen the usefulness of regional tracking for this indicator.

The indicator is defined as the percentage of teachers who have at least the minimum academic qualifications required for teaching their subjects in primary and secondary education as determined by national education authorities. In many cases, trained primary teachers will have a recognised qualification in primary teaching that certifies that they are qualified to teach. At the secondary level, teachers may require a qualification in a subject area that they are required to teach.

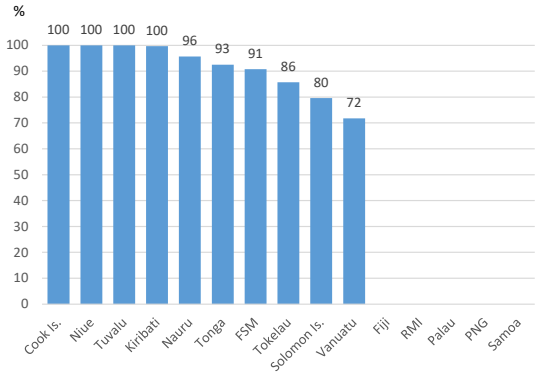

Figure 5.2.1 Qualified teachers in primary education

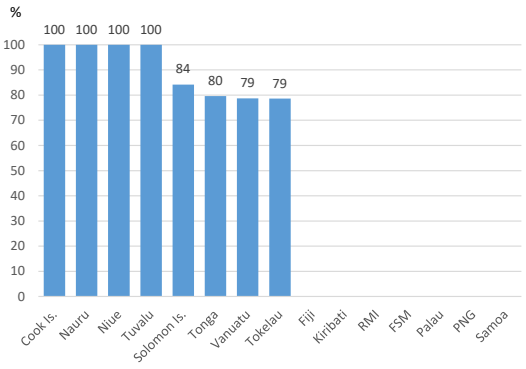

Figure 5.2.2 Qualified teachers in secondary education

From the available data (Figure 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), all primary teachers are qualified to teach in four countries, including Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue and Tuvalu, and more than 90 per cent of primary teachers are qualified to teach in FSM, Nauru and Tonga. All secondary teachers are qualified to teach their subjects in Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, and Tuvalu, and approximately 80 per cent of teachers are qualified in Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu.

For some PICTs, the relatively low levels of teacher qualifications have significant policy implications for the development of education. There is a need for further investigation into the opportunities available for teachers' professional development, including in-country and overseas study in degree-level subjects. Based on the available evidence, increases in the number of teachers with tertiary qualifications is likely to result in improvements in teaching and learning in the classroom.

5.3 Teacher supply

The purpose of the student–teacher ratio is to measure trained teacher workloads and human resource allocations in educational institutions, and to give a general indication of the average amount of time and individual attention a student is likely to receive from teachers. Student–teacher ratios are considered important determinants of learning outcomes and an indicator of the overall quality of an education system.

The technical definition of the student–teacher ratio is the average number of students per classroom teacher at a specific level of education in a given school year. The student–teacher ratio can be compared with established national standards on the number of students per teacher for each level or type of education. In the Pacific region, the national norms are generally between 25 and 30 students per teacher in primary education and between 20 and 25 students per teacher in secondary education.

A high student–teacher ratio suggests that each teacher has to be responsible for a large number of students; that is, the higher the student–teacher ratio, the lower the relative access of students to teachers. It is generally assumed that a low student–teacher ratio signifies smaller classes, which enables the teacher to pay more attention to individual students and may result in a better performance of the students in the long run.

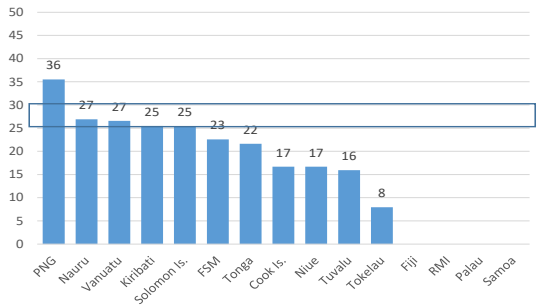

Figure 5.3.1 Student-teacher ratio in primary education

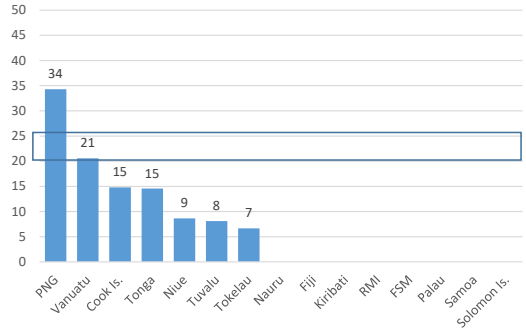

Figure 5.3.2 Student-teacher ratio in secondary education

Apart from PNG, the latest available student–teacher ratios are within or below regional norms in primary education (Figure 5.3.1), and well below regional norms in secondary education (5.3.2). On average, there are 22 students per primary teacher and 15 students per secondary teacher. It should be noted that this data are based on a headcount of teachers, and therefore does not account for part-time teachers. In particular, this ratio does not take into account the amount of instruction time that students have compared with the length of a teacher's working day, or how much time teachers spend teaching. Therefore, it cannot be interpreted in terms of class size.

There is a need for further investigation into the supply and demand for qualified and trained teachers within the Pacific region, such as research into the factors affecting the recruitment, retention and attrition of teachers, including teacher salary and employment conditions. The analysis should assess the equity of teacher provision with the education sector, with specific reference to gender distribution of teachers, urban/rural location of schools, school region/district, and socio-economic status of communities.

6. Status of Pacific education systems

6.1 Access and participation

Across the Pacific region, relatively few children are not enrolled in and attending primary school. The number of out-of-school children has been falling over the last three years (Figure 6.1.1). Evidence suggests that this is largely due to the free and compulsory nature of schooling and to the widely shared value placed on schooling that ensures that where there is access there is participation. Unfortunately, some PICTs face serious difficulties in providing schooling in remote and isolated areas and on distant islands. In many of these instances, children are required either to travel far or to relocate to attend school.

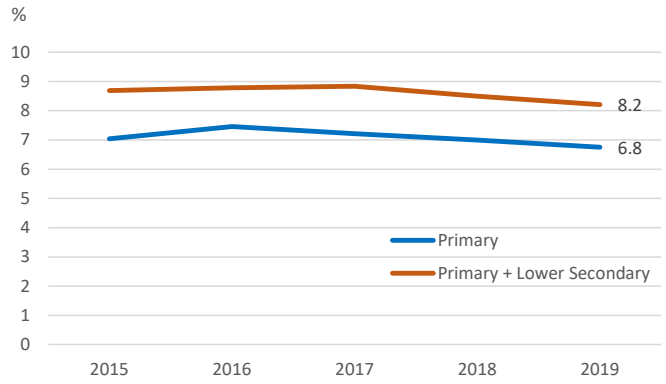

Figure 6.1.1 Regional out-of-school rate.

Solomon Islands: Out-of-school and over-age for grade

The total out-of-school rate at the national level increased from the previous year, especially for boys. This shows that both genders were not equally participating in the primary sector. Some of the contributing factors to high out-of-school rates include late entrants to education, distance to schools and dropping out before reaching final year of completion of the education level.

At the sub-national level, Guadalcanal Province recorded the largest increase in out-of-school rate from 2018. Guadalcanal has the highest out-of-school rate with 44.7%, which denotes that a significant proportion of children were not accessing basic education, or not attending primary education at their official age. Renbell (13.8%) and Western (12.7%) province have a significant improvement in out-of-school children from the previous year of 2018.

Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2019, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (abridged).

Although few PICTS have achieved full participation in early childhood education (ECE), the majority of children in the Pacific region benefit from some form of ECE, and the percentage of children that enrol in the year prior to primary education is increasing annually (Figure 6.1.2). The mode of ECE provision varies across the region with some governments funding ECE teachers' salaries and providing ECE facilities and materials, while others provide policy and regulatory frameworks to support and structure non-governmental provision of the same.

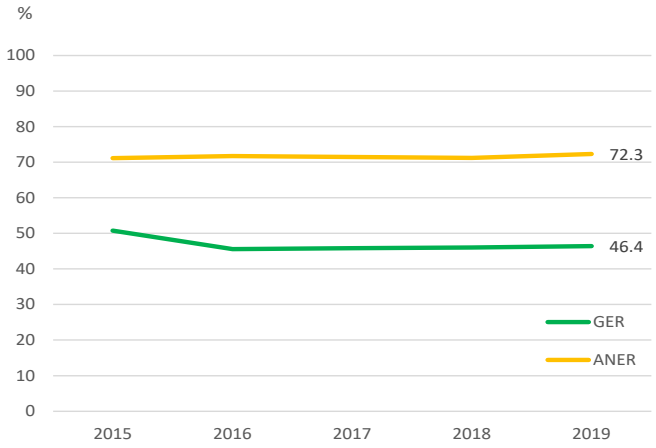

Figure 6.1.2 Regional ECE enrolment rate.

Vanuatu: Enrolment rates

The gross enrolment rate in ECCE has increased significantly from 2016 to 2018. The strengthening of ECCE data collection and the school grant were two incentives that contributed to the increase in GER for ECCE. Consequently the number of out-of-school children who are aged four and five years of age has significantly dropped, which clearly indicates that more children have been enrolled in the ECCE centres in the last two years.

Although there is an increase in the net enrolment rate in ECCE and in primary education between 2016 and 2018, the gap between the GER and NER remains significant. However, the percentage of the over-age students in existing ECCE centres has declined and the net enrolment rate in ECCE has increased. Subsequently, in primary schools, the NER has shown a slight increase.

Vanuatu Annual Statistical Digest 2016–2018, Ministry of Education and Training (abridged)

6.2 Progression and completion

The majority of children in the Pacific region attend and complete the last year of primary education and the trend has been slightly increasing. (Figure 6.2.13). It is believed that the policies of automatic promotion of students that most PICTs are also contributing factors to the high completion rates, as they have the effect of retaining students in the system and lessening the occurrence of children dropping out between grades. It should be noted that secondary completion rates are universally lower than primary completion rates for various reasons, including insufficient secondary places in some countries due to geographic factors, alternative pathways for TVET, and examination-based barriers to secondary enrolment.

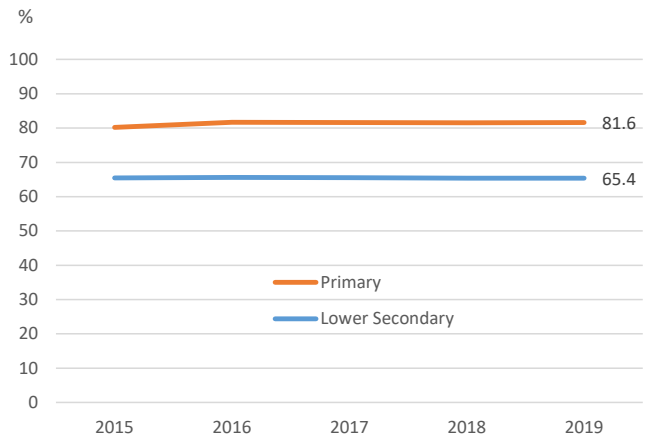

Figure 6.2.1 Regional gross intake to last grade.

RMI: Completion rates

The completion indicator provides the percentage of students who complete 8th grade and 12th grade for primary and secondary schools. The data shows general improvement in completion rates for primary schools and declining completion rates for secondary schools. This is largely due to a much higher drop-out rate for the secondary schools compared with the primary schools.

Children do not complete school for two reasons: firstly, they were never enrolled in school, and secondly, they enrolled in school but dropped out early without completing a certain level or grade of education. Both net and gross enrolment rates are relatively low at the primary and secondary level. This tends to indicate that a major cause of low-completion rates is that children were never enrolled in the first place.

RMI Education Statistics Digest Reports 2019 & 2020, Ministry of Education, Public School System (abridged).

6.3 Learning outcomes

The PILNA show that there have been significant improvements in numeracy and literacy for Year 6 students over the last three assessments (Figure 6.3.1). Most Year 6 students who were assessed are now proficient in numeracy with an average of eight out of 10 students meeting the expected standard and almost two-thirds of students meeting the regional literacy proficiency levels. However, too many children in the Pacific region are still not learning to read or comprehend what they read and are unable to write at expected levels. The fact that a substantial percentage of children do not achieve the expected curriculum outcomes for literacy is a critical system shortfall across almost all PICTs.

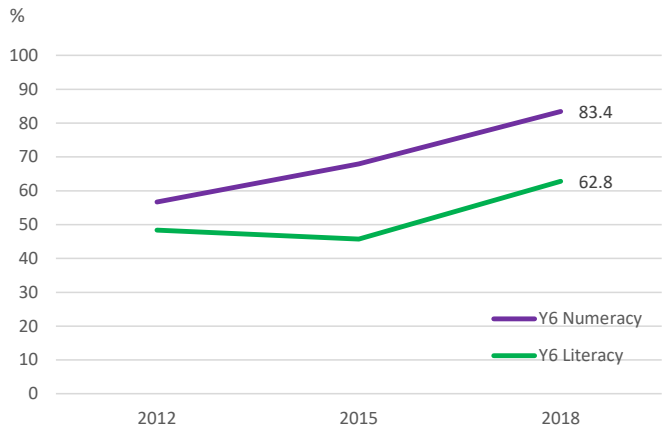

Figure 6.3.1 Regional literacy and numeracy proficiency.

Samoa: literacy and numeracy proficiency

Year 6 girls performed better than boys in every subject however, both genders are achieving below expected competencies. Numeracy has the highest critical levels with nearly three out of every ten girls and less than two out of every ten boys, meeting expected competency levels. In Year 6 English Literacy, five out of every ten girls and only two out of every ten boys are performing at expected competency levels. Samoan Literacy provides the best performance by gender with slightly more than three out of ten boys and almost six out of every ten girls, meeting minimum competencies.

Although the results are disturbing however, given the diagnostic function of assessments, the learning gaps for both boys and girls are being clearly identified and targeted. The Ministry continues to plan, implement and review solutions for improved teaching and learning in primary classrooms especially in relation to decreasing the gap between gender achievements and ensuring maximum competencies of all students.

Samoa Statistical Digest 2020, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (abridged).

6.4 Teaching profession

Based on available information, the regional supply of teachers in primary and secondary education continues to be sufficient to meet the regional benchmarks for student–teacher ratios. At the primary level, there is a continuing decline in the number of students per teacher and the overall ratio is currently 24 students per teacher (Figure 6.4.1). However, there has been an increase in the overall student–teacher ratio in secondary education with an average ratio of 15 students per teacher. Disaggregating the student–teacher ratio by location is important to show the extent of overcrowding that is common in urban schools and in rural schools with multi-grade teaching.

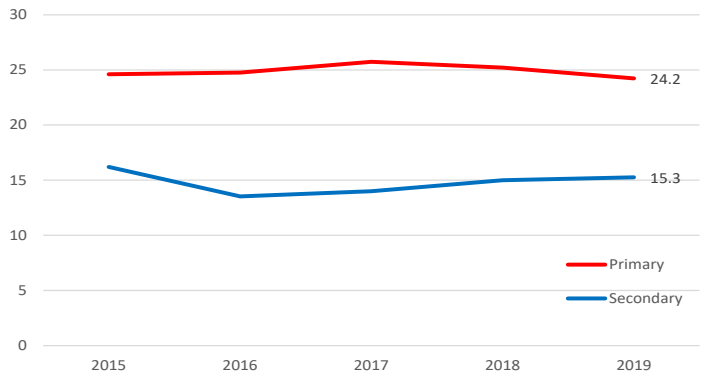

Figure 6.4.1 Regional student-teacher ratio.

Most teachers across the Pacific region are trained and have received at least the minimum required amount of formal pedagogical teacher training, either pre-service and/or in-service. There is a high percentage of trained teachers in primary education, but lower percentages in secondary education. Most countries have reported an increase in the number of trained and qualified teachers at primary and secondary levels.

FSM: Student–teacher ratio

A high student–teacher ratio suggests that teachers are responsible for larger groups of students, which hinders their ability to focus on individual students needs and learning abilities. Two states have very high student ratios – especially in ECE but also in primary education, which suggests a lack of teachers at the primary level.

The difference between the student–teacher ratio and student-qualified teacher ratio is small, which suggests that the teachers are getting more qualified but nevertheless are looking after too many students. The student-certified teacher ratio is the highest among all ratios, meaning that many teachers do not have the certifications to teach in FSM.

The vast majority of qualified teachers have either an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science or a Bachelor of Arts. The fourth largest group is teachers with only a secondary school diploma, which is not a high enough qualification to teach. FSM does have teachers with higher qualifications, but it forms a small percentage overall.

FSM Education Indicators School Year 2018–2019, National Department of Education

7. Regional educational initiatives

Over three four-year phases, the PacREF will operationalise the commitments of member states to raise the quality of their education systems, improve learners' outcomes, and produce high-quality graduates. In response to the serious performance challenges that Pacific region education systems face, the PacREF offers PICTs access to an integrated set of regional tools and mechanisms that are designed to assist them to meet their education objectives.

To meet this obligation, the PacREF shapes the investment of significant regional resources in a sustained strengthening of key regional agencies, which enables them to consistently provide Pacific-focused goods and services and to embed a series of Pacific region education standards, such as teacher competences. The PacREF provides a means to identify and understand similarities and differences across the region – it offers organising mechanisms for sector planning, reporting and collaboration and, most importantly, it provides development partners with an understanding of where the region's resourcing priorities lie.

The PacREF prioritises action on quality and relevance, learning pathways, student outcomes and well-being, and on the teaching profession. Its primary objective is to ensure sustainable gains in student learning outcomes across the Pacific region. It is committed to inclusive learning – it recognises and responds to the disadvantages faced by groups and communities (e.g. girls, young women, youth, persons with disabilities, rural communities, minority groups, etc.) in accessing education and/or training[4].

Importantly, the PacREF will direct significant resources to ensure that education is relevant to all children in the Pacific region. It will strengthen classroom practices and provide the tools through which the region's education systems can provide schools with competent, motivated teachers. By supporting the development of alternative learning pathways and investing in national and regional assessment systems, the PacREF will seek to ensure students in the Pacific region experience an attractive educational experience and master the necessary skills to move through their education successfully and in a timely and rewarding manner.

In summary, the PacREF will assist national education systems across the Pacific region to address the persistent challenges of improving learning outcomes and preparing students for continued education or work. Emphasis during the first four years of PacREF (Phase 1) is on improving the delivery of the combination of services that will ensure that the Pacific region's school systems are able to offer children access to high-quality ECE and basic education, and to ensure that children progress from their primary education having mastered age appropriate cognitive and non-cognitive skills.

An important part of PacREF's agenda is to ensure that systems in the Pacific region employ effective and efficient planning tools – a critical element of which is the availability of timely, comprehensive and reliable education data. To ensure that quality education statistics are available in each system, the PacREF will provide significant support of regional and associated national mechanisms that build EMIS capacity, and policy and planning skills development. In supporting a regional data collection mechanism, the PacREF will assist FEdMM to monitor and guide PacREF's oversight, implementation, and planning as well as develop a regional tool for reporting progress towards achieving SDG 4 targets.

[4] The Framework aligns with the 2012 *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration* in striving towards gender parity in informal, primary, secondary and tertiary education and training. It also supports the *Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016—2025* and responds to its goal of expanding early intervention and education of children with disabilities.

Regional tools, services or standards to be developed by PacREF

Quality and relevance

- Regionally identified and agreed definition(s) of non-cognitive skills.
- Regional tools for needs assessments related to the quality of school learning environments in the Pacific region.
- Quality assurance frameworks for quality school learning environments.

Learning pathways

- Regional policy guidelines for the development of quality ECE and tools for the governance, management, quality assurance, financing and programme development of ECE.
- Regional framework for the domains of home to school transitions.
- Regional framework for identifying learning pathways from ECE to adulthood.
- Pacific Skills Portal.
- Regional Pacific Skills Dialogue/Summit.

Student outcomes and well-being

- Waka Learning Hub.
- Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (primary).
- Regional assessment at lower-secondary level.

Teaching profession

- Regional teacher competency standards.
- Regional accreditation and recognition of the Pacific region's teacher education programmes.
- Regional standards and qualifications in school leadership.
- Regional framework for teachers' continuous professional development.

PacREF Results Framework, Educational Quality and Assessment Programme

Annex 1: PacREF Key Performance Indicators

1 Quality and relevance

- 1.1 Percentage of primary and secondary schools meeting national minimum service standards
- 1.2 Percentage of primary schools with vernacular instruction in first three years
- 1.3 Percentage of primary and secondary schools with access to drinking water and basic sanitation
- 1.4 Percentage of primary and secondary schools with access to computers for pedagogical use
- 1.5* Out-of-school rate for primary, lower- and upper-secondary education
- 1.6 Percentage of children over-age for grade in primary and lower secondary education

2 Learning pathways

- 2.1* Participation rate of youth and adults in formal/non-formal education/training in last 12 months
- 2.2 Gross/net enrolment rate (GER/NER) in early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education
- 2.3* Participation rate in early childhood education (ECE) the year before primary education
- 2.4 Transition rate between primary, secondary and tertiary education
- 2.5 Retention rate for primary and secondary education
- 2.6* Youth participation rate in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes

3 Student outcomes

- 3.1 Educational attainment rate for secondary, TVET and tertiary education
- 3.2 Percentage of pre-school children who are school-ready
- 3.3* Percentage of primary students achieving proficiency in (English) literacy
- 3.4* Percentage of primary students achieving proficiency in (mathematics) numeracy
- 3.5* Gross intake ratio to the last year (GIRLY) for primary and lower/upper secondary education
- 3.6* Completion rate for primary and lower/upper secondary education

4 Teaching profession

- 4.1 Percentage of teachers meeting professional standards in primary and secondary education
- 4.2* Percentage of trained teachers in primary and secondary education
- 4.3 Percentage of qualified teachers in primary and secondary education
- 4.4 Student–teacher ratio by education level for qualified and trained teachers in primary and secondary education
- 4.5 Percentage of teachers having annual professional development in primary and secondary education

Note: * = Priority indicators

References

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme 2019. Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment 2018 Regional Report. Fiji: Pacific Community.

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme 2020. PacREF Results Framework, Fiji: Pacific Community

Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 2020. Samoa Statistical Digest 2020. Samoa: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

Ministry of Education 2020 RMI Education Statistics Digest Reports 2019 & 2020. Republic of Marshall Islands: Ministry of Education, Public School System

Ministry of Education and Training 2019 Vanuatu Annual Statistical Digest 2016–2018. Vanuatu: Ministry of Education and Training.

Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development 2020. Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2019. Solomon Islands: Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development

Kiribati National Statistics Office. 2019. Kiribati Social Development Indicator Survey 2018-19: Survey Findings Report. South Tarawa, Kiribati: National Statistics Office.

National Statistical Office 2019 Papua New Guinea Demographic and Health Survey 2016-18. Papua New Guinea: National Statistical Office.

National Department of Education 2020. FSM Education Indicators School Year 2018–2019. Federated States of Micronesia: National Department of Education

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2018. Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) 2018–2030: Moving Towards Education 2030. Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2018. Metadata for the global and thematic indicators for the follow-up and review of SDG 4 and Education 2030. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UIS Data Centre 2020. http//data.uis.unesco.org (accessed 23 September 2020).