LITERACY AND NUMERACY SITUATION IN THE PACIFIC

Using a regional instrument (PILNA)- Where are we, and what does the evidence say?

‘Looking after Learners of today and tomorrow’
Background

- Endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Ministers of Education Meeting (FEdMM) in 2010 in PNG.

- **Purpose** to establish **regional baseline** based on Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks endorsed by FEdMM in 2006.

- Individual countries can use **baseline** to identify country situation and set national baseline (if not already done so) and implement appropriate interventions.
Background

- Administered in September/October 2012 to 14 PICs
- Draft Reports submitted to each country for further possible action.
- Administered again in 2015 to monitor initial impact of early interventions.
- Key Development Partners are:
  - DFAT (AusAID) – Funding
  - UNESCO – Funding as well as intellectual knowledge
  - SPC/SPBEA - Funding, Intellectual Knowledge and administration
Sample used in the Survey

- A stratified sample comprising a total of 13,159 pupils completing 4 years and 13,776 completing 6 years of primary education.
Interpreting and reporting the results

- At three levels:
**Key finding 1:** Three in every ten pupils having acquired the literacy skills expected both after four and six years of primary schooling.
Interpreting the finding; What does it mean?

**Yet to work towards expected level:**
- At least 1 grade level below.
- Need to determine “point of readiness to learn at lower level”.

**Working towards expected level:**
- Within “students capability or potential”.
- Need right help at right time.

**Working at expected level:**
- Do not know how far above expected level.
- Need to determine “point of readiness to learn at next level”

Situation at End of 4 Years:
- 16.9
green
- 30.2
red
- 52.8
blue

Situation at End of 6 Years:
- 29
red
- 29.2
blue
- 41.8
green

+ve
-ve
**Key Finding 2:** Numeracy situation much brighter than literacy with **approximately five** in every **ten** pupils demonstrating the numeracy skills expected after four and six years of primary schooling.
Key Finding 3: Gender a factor influencing performance of pupils with girls performing better at the expected level than boys in both literacy and numeracy after four and six years of primary schooling.
Key Finding 4: School location also a factor in pupils’ performance with pupils from urban schools performing better in literacy than those from rural schools both at end of four and six years primary schooling.
Key Finding 5: Pupils in non-government schools performing significantly better in literacy than those in government schools, both after four and six years schooling, but no such difference in numeracy.
Key Finding 6: Pupils considered to be over-aged performing better in literacy after four years schooling but those of correct age performing better after six years.
Key Finding 7: Pupils across the Pacific demonstrating significantly better in Reading Comprehension Skills than Writing Skills both after Four and Six Years of Primary Schooling.
Key Messages From Findings

**Key message 1:**

Current status of literacy throughout the Pacific is at a dire situation and needs urgent and immediate intervention both at the regional and at the country level if the situation is to improve.
Key message 2:

Significant proportion of children completing six years formal schooling have yet to acquire the pre-requisite literacy skills expected at the earlier years and will continue to struggle with future academic studies unless the situation is immediately addressed.
Key message 3:
The Writing Skills (Reading Comprehension Skills to a lesser extent) of children throughout the Pacific is at a critical stage and need urgent intervention, considering their importance in the future academic pursuit and livelihood of children.
**Key message 4:**

While the numeracy situation in the Pacific is not as critical as the literacy situation, the proportion of children completing six years of primary schools but not acquiring the numeracy skills expected at that level should be a concern to all countries.
Overall Recommendations

- **agree** for the findings of the survey at the regional level (this report) to be shared with key stakeholders, such as donors and development partners, to be used in trying to identify the best way forward in the effort to improve the literacy and numeracy situation in the Pacific.

- **approve** for the PILNA survey to be administered again at the end of 2015 to all PICs with the purpose of diagnosing and monitoring the literacy and numeracy situation in the Pacific.
PACIFIC BENCHMARKING EDUCATION QUALITY FOR RESULTS (PaBER)

Evidence based approach
Emphasis is on a new approach which emphasized at using evidence to benchmark situation between countries in the Pacific as well as beyond. Focus is on improving literacy and numeracy in the Pacific based on evidence to review policies in areas that directly influence student learning. Piloted in three countries; PNG, Samoa and Solomon Islands.
Key questions that PaBER will answer:

- What is the current situation in each country in terms of literacy and numeracy as well as policies that influence the situation?
- How well is the system in each pilot country doing compared to each other as well as compared other systems beyond the Pacific. Hence need to use external tools from World Bank.
- What are the better performers doing that the poorer performers are not doing?
- Based on evidence from data collection and research, what interventions need to be implemented to bring out improvement in literacy and numeracy learning of children.
Relationship between components and flow of work

Component 1. Learning Assessment
- Learning assessment tests
- Contextual questions
- Analysis / Reports

Component 2. Policy and System Assessment
- System assessment tools
- Analysis / reports

Component 3. Policy in Practice
- Field research
- Analysis
- Country and Regional Reports

Results
- Evidence-based guidance to inform policy and put in place interventions to improve learning

Country Situational Analysis
- Institutional Capacity Analysis

Flow of work:
1. Component 1. Learning Assessment
2. Component 2. Policy and System Assessment
3. Component 3. Policy in Practice
4. Results
PaBER’s approach is to develop and use tools to inform and identify policy and interventions that will improve learning outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Situational Analysis</th>
<th>Institutional Capacity</th>
<th>Policy Intent</th>
<th>Policy Implementation/Practice</th>
<th>Student Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of education indicators, institutional arrangements and current challenges</td>
<td>Institutional capacity analysis of ministry departments/units</td>
<td>Adapted version of SABER tools to benchmark pilot countries against international best practice</td>
<td>Field-based qualitative research involving local-level studies and school surveys</td>
<td>PILNA Literacy and Numeracy Grade 6 2012 and 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes of PaBER:
- Capacity developed
- Integration of PaBER into country level Education Strategy and National Action Plans
Understanding the PaBER Benchmarking Approach

- Aims at improving Literacy and Numeracy learning by targeting policies in key priority areas in the education system.

- Key policy areas targeted (identified by pilot countries);
  - Teacher Quality
  - Assessment Systems
  - Curriculum and Materials
  - School Governance and Management

- Emphasis on identifying gaps between policy intent and policy implementation.
Understanding the PaBER Benchmarking Approach

- Data collected on status and intent of policies in each target area.
- Benchmarked against each pilot country as well as internationally.
- Regional and international comparability of data.
- Used internationally recognized tools (World Bank & PaBER tools).
- Data used to identify policy issues directly influencing learning.
- Issues form basis for field research to identify evidence on influence of policy implementation on student achievements.
Understanding the PaBER Benchmarking Approach

- Research Evidence used for benchmarking (best practices) and identify relevant policy interventions that bring about improvement in literacy and numeracy achievements.
- Establish literacy and numeracy baseline for each pilot country.
- Monitor situation for improvement at end of pilot (2015) and beyond.
The PaBER Benchmarking Approach

Teacher Quality (SABER)

School Governance and Management (SABER)

Assessment Systems (SABER)

Issues

Issues

Issues

Issues

Literacy & Numeracy Performance

Curriculum & Materials (PaBER)
What Results has PaBER Achieved?

1. WB SABER Tool on Student Assessment
2. WB SABER Tool on Teacher Quality
3. SABER Tool on School Autonomy & Accountability
4. PaBER Tool on Curriculum & Materials

Current Status of Implementation:

1. Student Assessment Completed
2. Teacher Quality Data Collection Completed
3. School Autonomy & Accountability Completed
4. Tool yet to be developed and data yet to be collected.

Setting L & N Baseline (PILNA 2012)
## Overall Results Achieved

### Overall Achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Papua New Guinea</th>
<th>Samoa</th>
<th>Solomon Islands</th>
<th>Overall (PaBER)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Assessment Units have sufficient staff and capacity to handle all the assessment activities within Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Literacy and numeracy baseline established for 3 pilot countries.</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pilot countries take into account recommendations in the PILNA/ PaBER report for policy development /review</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes: Emerging, Partially Achieved, Achieved

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*Note: The table uses symbols to represent the level of achievement for each outcome in each country.*
Use four-point scale based on World Bank reporting of SABER Tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflects policy feature not in place</td>
<td>Reflects some good practices; but work still in progress</td>
<td>Reflects good practices, but with some limitations</td>
<td>Reflects international best practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Benchmarking Institutional Capacity

- Benchmarking Institutional Capacity of Assessment Division in Pilot Countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions for Benchmarking</th>
<th>PNG</th>
<th>SAMOA</th>
<th>SOLOMON ISLANDS</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandate</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Structures &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Strategies</td>
<td>Latent</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Country Response

Solomon Is

- Implement Capacity Building Plan based on the findings from Capacity Analysis.
- Recruitment of relevant staff to National Examinations and Standards Unit (NESU) completed.
- A Professional Development Trainings Program for staff on technical skills (psychometric skills).
- Short attachments with ACER, Australia have been organized for selected NESU officers in 2014.
- Conduct a skills audit of assessment staff to identify targeted professional development areas.
## Specific Result Area 2: Setting the Baseline for Literacy and Numeracy

- Establish baseline for **Overall Literacy** at end of six years primary schooling based on regional benchmarks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Country A</th>
<th>Country B</th>
<th>Country C</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Literacy</strong></td>
<td>Performing at expected level</td>
<td><strong>Performing at expected level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Performing at expected level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working towards expected level</td>
<td><strong>Working towards expected level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Working towards expected level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not yet working towards expected level</td>
<td><strong>Not yet working towards expected level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not yet working towards expected level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Setting the Baseline for Literacy and Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Country A</th>
<th>Country B</th>
<th>Country C</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Comprehension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing at expected level</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working towards expected level</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet working towards expected level</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Competency Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing at expected level</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working towards expected level</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet working towards expected level</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Country Response

Samoa

- Minister and Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC) Core Executive briefed on the results.
- MESC integrated PILNA recommendations into its current intervention initiatives.
- Two research projects as part of the Education Support Program II focus on Literacy and Numeracy.
- Recently completed Numeracy research findings will be factored into the intervention strategies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAA Policy Goals</th>
<th>Level of Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Autonomy in Budget Planning and Approval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Autonomy in Personnel Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participation of School Council in School Governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assessment of School and Student Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Key Result Area 3: School Governance and Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAA Policy Goals</th>
<th>Level of Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Accountability to Stakeholders</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○○○○○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Strategic direction</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○○○○○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Support to leadership</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○○○○○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Country Response

Solomon Is

- Final report from World Bank released and validated by MEHRD and Report posted on WB’s global web-site.
- Results on outcome of data collected disseminated to Key stakeholders; MEHRD officers, Education Authorities and Donor Partners.
- SABER recommendations disseminated to responsible MEHRD divisions and key stakeholders for action.
- Submission to Education Act Review Team to consider putting in place legislation that guides the operation of school boards or committees.
Key Result Area 4: Assessment Systems

- Data on status of policies on assessment system and their intent collected from three pilots countries using the World Bank SABER Tool on Student Assessment.
- Draft Report for Samoa available and draft reports for PNG and Solomon Is expected soon.

Key Result Area 5: Teacher Quality

- Data on status of policies on teacher quality and their intent collected from three pilots countries using the World Bank SABER Tool on Teacher Quality.
- Data currently being analyzed by World Bank before draft report available.
Key Result Area 5: Curriculum & Materials

- Instrument for data collection currently being developed and ready for data collection later in the year. Consultation with Pearson on this component. World Bank tool not available.

Key Result Area 6: Policy in Practice (Field Research)

- Will be implemented in 2nd half of the year. Draft Research Framework developed and used as basis for research in all three pilot countries.

- Emphasis on identifying how policies are being implemented on the ground and influence on learning.
Recommendations

• **Note** the progress the PaBER pilot project has achieved to date and as outlined in this report.

• **Approve** in principle the rolling out of a revised version of the benchmarking approach adopted by PaBER to further countries in the Pacific (phase 2), as per original intention, starting with the re-run of the PILNA survey in 2015, and depending on availability of funding.

• **Report** back to the next FEdMM on key findings and evidence from outcome of the PaBER pilot, and recommendations on interventions for improving literacy and numeracy in pilot countries, as well as implications for other countries.
THANK YOU