



PACIFIC BENCHMARKING FOR EDUCATION RESULTS (PaBER)

SOLOMON ISLANDS REPORT



Ministry of Education
& Human Resources Development



Pacific Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

SOLOMON ISLANDS REPORT

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Compiled by EQAP

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ABBREVIATIONS

EA	Education Authority
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
ESF	Education Strategic Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Gender Parity Index
LPMU	Literacy Programme Management Unit
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
NEAP	National Education Action Plan
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NESU	National Examination and Standards Unit
PaBER	Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results
PD	Professional Development
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PINEAPPLES	Pacific Island National Evaluation Analysis Policy and Planning Leveraging Education Statistics
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SISTA	Solomon Islands Standardised Test of Achievement
SPC	Pacific Community
SSU	Services and Strategic support Unit
TVET	Technical and Vocational and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PaBER pilot project is a journey of three countries in their quest to bring to every education system in Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands and the Pacific at large a process, an approach that brings value and clarity to what we may have already been doing or that we should do in our own ministries of education. It was all made possible by the Government of Australia.

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Members of the Steering Committee and Technical Working Group, those who left and those joined the journey at different stages, we are indebted to you, for your patience and endurance throughout the long hours of so many meetings and the way in which you always value the changes the project is beginning to make in your own systems.

We also express our appreciation to World Bank in providing assistance with SABER tools in terms of training as well as data analysis and report writing. We are also grateful to all other organisations who have supported and contributed to the success of the PaBER project in one way or another.

The pilot project may have ended at the regional level, however there is still work to do at the country level before the benefits of PaBER are fully evident.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results (PaBER) programme was introduced in 2012 to improve the quality of education and student performance across the Pacific, in particular to respond to low levels of literacy and numeracy. PaBER provides education ministries with systematic and reliable evidence and analysis of their own systems, benchmarked against high performing systems globally. This gives policy-makers and other stakeholders the opportunity to judge the strengths and weaknesses of current policy and systems, assess how these may influence learning, and formulate appropriate reforms and action. PaBER was set up to test this approach in three pilot countries (Solomon Islands, Samoa and Papua New Guinea).

To achieve these ambitions, PaBER was designed around three components: i) learning assessment of Year 6 students' performance in literacy and numeracy, based on the use of the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) in 2012 and 2015; ii) policy and system assessment, benchmarking of national education systems in each of five policy domains: Teacher Quality, Assessment Systems, Curriculum and Materials, School Governance and Management, and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS); iii) policy in practice, consisting of research on policy implementation at school level. Along with institutional capacity assessments, this body of work is enabling a dynamic view of education systems, with a particular focus on student learning.

This report pulls together the evidence from the three components and, from this, sets out strategic recommendations that will impact on learning outcomes. This draws on a body of evidence set out in over 40 reports covering country and cross-country analysis. It

is not possible in this report to do justice to the breadth and depth of this broader evidence base. The report highlights some key emerging findings where there is strongest evidence and the ways these intersect across policy domains. Recommendations are based on this, set out as both policy reforms and actions to improve delivery, premised on joined up responses to key barriers to improving student learning. Over the four years of its implementation, PaBER has achieved a significant amount, including the collaboration of pilot countries, generation of evidence, and establishment of an approach that can be built on in coming years, both in these three countries and potentially others in the region.

CONTEXT

Section 2 of the report provides contextual background that is important to the PaBER analysis in a number of ways. The results of the research need to be applied in the specific context of Solomon Islands, its structure and levels of decentralisation, and should both align with and inform national priorities. Solomon Islands has a decentralised education system, and a key challenge has been the interface between national and subnational levels, particularly oversight and quality assurance of delivery. More than half of all the primary schools are run by provincial governments. Most others are church schools, apart from a small number of independent, non-faith-based providers. In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) adopted a longer-term Education Strategic Framework (ESF) 2016–2030. The ESF sets out the broad road map for education in Solomon Islands with specific education targets and strategies for achieving them through the National Education Action Plan (NEAP) 2016–2020. The new ambitious goals inspired by the SDGs include universal access to high-quality basic primary and secondary education for all children,

and improved access to early childhood and TVET education.

Solomon Islands has made progress over the longer term, but still faces challenges in expanding equitable access to basic education, particularly with completion rates (60 per cent) for basic education, and attendance problems. In terms of learning outcomes, the PILNA conducted in 2012 as part of the PaBER pilot, indicated some worrying results, in line with other country-level assessments (e.g., SISTA). The majority of students assessed are not performing at satisfactory or expected levels in literacy (59.4 per cent) or numeracy (19.3 per cent). In literacy assessments, students in urban schools performed better than those in rural schools, and non-government schools outperformed government schools. However, results in numeracy show very little differences between these subgroups.

KEY FINDINGS

The analysis set out in Section 3 of the report aims to identify areas where the evidence is strongest, where weaknesses identified through research may represent critical bottlenecks, and where there are clear implications for improving learning outcomes. A team from the MEHRD ensured findings could also respond to stated country policy priorities. The more in-depth analysis provided in the source reports represents an important resource for more detailed work in each of these areas.

The key findings are set out against each of the policy domains, as represented in the summary in Table 1 below. These findings and associated analysis go some way to capturing the extent to which policy is in place, the difference between policy level intent and the reality of delivery at school level and, where we have it, an understanding of how institutional and staff capacity influences this dynamic. In some cases, specific action has already been taken to respond to some of these findings in the period since the research was undertaken.

EMERGING THEMES AND PRIORITIES

The findings are the basis for a broader analysis of emerging themes and priorities set out in Section 4 of the report. This looks at ways in which the evidence points to key linkages across the sector, and priorities

in terms of improving classroom teaching and learning.

The use of assessment, particularly classroom assessment, to inform teaching and improve learning. The enabling environment for assessment is not sufficiently in place, leading to ineffective implementation and use of results. Assessment is not being used effectively to monitor teaching and learning, nor is it used to make school adjustments. The low capacity of school managers, teachers and assessment staff at different levels contributes to this.

Inconsistent provision of teacher professional development, monitoring and support. Provision of ongoing professional development, and the associated monitoring and support given to teachers, are insufficient and inconsistent. There is a lack of clarity around how professional development should be targeted and delivered, or even the minimum annual requirements. Some important priorities are not being effectively supported, and professional development does not draw on a range of methods known to work.

The lack of teaching materials to support classroom learning highlights the need for more effective procurement and distribution systems. Policy articulation concerning the curriculum cycle is clear. Practice, however, indicates a weakness in the procurement, distribution and monitoring of learning materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations are highlighted in Section 5. These draw on the country reports and look at the potential for joined up responses, and target improvements in classroom teaching and learning processes. They are strategic, evidence-based recommendations that draw on the key findings. As such, they represent a first step towards implementation planning. More in-depth technical level recommendations are provided in the background reports. The recommendations are represented in summary in Table 2 below.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS BY PaBER DOMAIN

TEACHER QUALITY	ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS	CURRICULUM & MATERIALS	SCHOOL GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT	EMIS
MEHRD may not be attracting the most talented candidates into the teaching profession due to having low minimum entry requirements to the profession.	Classroom assessment policies do not adequately guide effective and consistent implementation or use of assessment results across schools.	Procurement and quality assurance of curriculum materials are broadly stated in policy but lack specific direction for implementation and guidance for monitoring implementation.	There is a lack of policy at central level to support school autonomy (school governance and operations).	Operations of EMIS have been established but are not supported and guided by a comprehensive EMIS policy.
Professional development of teachers at national and school level is inconsistent and insufficient for the needs of teachers, in part due to the lack of clear policy guidance.	The skills and competencies of teachers to effectively carry out classroom assessments varies considerably, limiting the use of the results to provide effective intervention for improving student learning.	The assessment and reporting of student learning, including performance of the curriculum, is well articulated in policy. Practice however, shows that implementation is inconsistent across schools, teachers are not confident in using curriculum outcomes to assess student learning, and reporting of student achievement is limited to final grades.	There is limited use of assessment results for school and management decisions. This is compounded that mechanisms are not well established to enable stakeholders to demand accountability through use of school and student assessment results.	EMIS data is not being fully utilised by stakeholders for school and system planning and management or informing policy decisions.
Assessment results and teacher performance appraisal are not used effectively to guide improvement in teaching and learning.	The lack of an overarching policy for the national large scale assessment (SISTA), and limited capacity in the assessment unit (NESU) limit the effective implementation and dissemination of results.	Teacher competency in the implementation of the curriculum is generally supported through professional development and monitored through the national professional standards for teachers, although not all teachers understand this. Policy however, does not mandate the focus of professional development, and hence, only benefits some teachers.	There is lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of school committees and community.	There are capacity and technical constraints in the operations of EMIS.

TABLE 2: Recommendations based on PaBER findings

RECOMMENDATION	KEY ACTIONS
Strengthen classroom and national assessment practice to inform teaching and learning, and improve accountability	<p>Review, strengthen and update the policy and guidelines for assessment, covering school / classroom based assessment and the broader national level assessment of learning.</p> <p>Review should include administration, reporting / dissemination and use of data for decision-making for SISTA, guidelines on the evaluation of student performance, and give direction to the use of classroom assessment.</p> <p>Mandate schools to develop assessment plans and guidelines.</p> <p>Teacher, head teacher and assessment staff training in classroom assessment.</p>
Enhance teacher skills through more systematic and comprehensive professional development	<p>Develop a comprehensive professional development framework.</p> <p>Include a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide school-based professional development</p> <p>Training for head-teachers to provide leadership to teachers, particularly on improving their teaching practice and content knowledge.</p> <p>Develop induction training policy guide for novice teachers.</p> <p>Ensure teachers and head-teachers familiar with the National Teacher Standards</p>
Develop mechanisms for procurement and monitoring of learning resources	<p>Undertake a strategic review of procurement and distribution of curriculum materials to all schools.</p> <p>Monitor the effectiveness of the process of procurement and distribution.</p> <p>Mandate schools to use school budgets to purchase learning materials.</p> <p>Develop school-based responsibilities to manage and coordinate the supply of learning resources, including an oversight role for school committees.</p>
Strengthen school-based management functions and capacity	<p>Undertake a review and consolidation of policies establishing the School Committees.</p> <p>Develop a manual that sets out the operation of School Committee with associate training.</p> <p>Expand the current use of Whole School Inspection in ensuring schools meet national standards.</p>
Consolidate and ensure the future development of EMIS	<p>Establish an EMIS policy to set out provisions for the budget; data collection, management and utilisation; integration with external databases; and professional development.</p>



INTRODUCTION

PaBER was first conceptualised as an approach to address a regional concern that too many children leave primary school without the necessary literacy and numeracy skills.¹ In response to this concern the Pacific Forum Education Ministers Meeting 2010 endorsed the concept of ‘*benchmarking the quality of education for results*’ to improve the quality of education and student performance across the Pacific, building on benchmarking already underway in selected countries. A pilot project was proposed and three countries – Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Samoa – were selected to take part in the pilot.

THE PaBER PILOT

The aim of the PaBER programme is to improve literacy and numeracy levels of children in the region through a process that will equip policy-makers in Pacific countries with the information and knowledge to drive interventions that will have a real effect on learning results. The outcome from PaBER is that, at the end of the project, pilot countries are better positioned to plan and implement interventions and reforms that will improve learning.

To achieve this outcome, PaBER was designed around three components. The first component, Learning Assessment, is targeted at diagnoses of Year 6 students’ performance which are then used to inform policy development. The Learning Assessment component included the use of the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) in 2012 as a regional

assessment for measuring literacy and numeracy outcomes at the primary (Year 6) level. Results of the PILNA 2012 and subsequent preliminary results of the PILNA 2015 have been shared with and among the three pilot countries and capacity measured and

developed within the relevant ministries for using assessment data to develop policy for improving learning.

The second component, Policy and System Assessment, undertook the benchmarking of national education systems in each of five policy domains: Teacher Quality, Assessment Systems, School Governance and Management, Curriculum and Materials, and the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The EMIS was added as a domain partway through the pilot project. The World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) tools were adopted for use in four of the domains. A parallel tool, modelled on the SABER tools, to measure Curriculum and Materials, was developed specifically for the PaBER project.

Through component two, the national systems in the five policy domains have been benchmarked against international good practice. This gives policy-makers and other stakeholders the opportunity to judge the strengths and weaknesses of current policy and systems, and how these may influence learning, and to formulate appropriate reforms and action. The SABER reports for each of the countries have been adopted and publicised on the World Bank website, contributing to the global

¹ Learning for all: Investing in people’s knowledge and skills to promote development, World Bank Education Strategy 2020 as referenced in programme design document: Pacific benchmarking for education results (2012)

body of knowledge in these areas. A system of cross-country analysis was adopted within PaBER to build capacity in relevant ministries in the use of benchmarking for improvement in target areas.

To deepen the analysis provided around these policy domains, PaBER also undertook a number of institutional and capacity assessments, the aim of which was to provide analysis of current capacity and key bottlenecks in delivering in these five domains. Particular focus was given to capacity around the implementation and use of student assessment. Although the policy tools provided a ‘snapshot in time’ of systems in the three countries, through cross-country analysis, practices have been shared and policies and systems have been and continue to be adjusted with reference to international standards. This demonstrates the dynamic dimension of PaBER, and how strong country ownership of this evidence base has already led to policy and system reforms and strengthening.

The third component of PaBER, Policy in Practice, called for valid and reliable data to be collected on the implementation of education policy in schools and classrooms. A research framework, data analysis and reporting framework and associated data collection instruments were developed with input from all three countries and collaboratively adapted and subsequently adopted for use. The field evidence is now being used to facilitate policy review and development in the related domains as well as to inform ministries as they build capacity in comparative analyses of country practice. While component two focuses mainly on policy intent, this field research is an important step in understanding what that looks like on the ground. It is well recognised that having a policy in place does not guarantee its effective and consistent implementation. There are complex dynamics involved in this. Taken together, these two components aim to help government and others to understand which policies may help improve learning outcomes, what needs to be done in order to deliver these in practice, but also to ensure that the realities of practice can inform policy.

THE PaBER APPROACH

Benchmarking is at the heart of both the PaBER pilot project and what has now been dubbed ‘the PaBER

approach’. Originally developed for the business world, benchmarking provides a systematic process for measuring and comparing the performance and work processes of one organisation to those of another. The goal of benchmarking is to provide an objective standard for measuring the quality, cost and efficiency of internal activities, and to help identify where opportunities for improvement may be found. The adoption of a benchmarking approach in education represents a significant shift in education system development and reform, since it involves making available performance information that permits comparisons within and between systems. Benchmarking in education attempts to answer three questions:

1. How well is a system, or parts of a system, doing compared to an external reference standard, defined in relation to the performance of others?
2. What are the better performers doing that the poorer performers are not?
3. What interventions can be developed to bring about improved learning outcomes?

Benchmarking provides a baseline against which the performance of education systems can be monitored, and it also facilitates diagnosis – understanding areas of lower performance and the underlying factors to act upon to bring improvement. It also helps to provide a measure of transparency so that stakeholders are able to hold education providers accountable for the quality of education based on evidence rather than anecdotes or political rhetoric.²

The PaBER team developed an approach to examine and apply the findings from the analytical work carried out throughout the three components of the project. This consisted of applying the same instruments/tools in all countries, which included an internal validation process where the countries signed off on the findings. Every analytical work then went through a cross-country analysis at the regional level.

Regional workshops were then held with participants from the countries. The reports were presented and a cross-country analysis was carried out to explore commonalities as well as contextual findings unique

² Programme design document: Pacific benchmarking for education results (2012).

to each country. The workshops allowed for a robust exchange of ideas and knowledge. The findings and recommendations from these workshops were captured in cross-country regional reports. The crosscutting-analysis among the three countries was at the heart of the PaBER approach.

As noted above, existing instruments were utilised for some of the activities, including the PILNA tool and the SABER instruments of the World Bank. The SABER methodology includes identification of indicators of policy and institutional development, as well as the data source for each indicator. A rubric has been developed for combining the indicators to come up with ratings of the countries' progress within each domain.

SABER instruments have been standardised so that progress along each dimension is defined on a four-point scale, ranging from 'latent' (the lowest level) through 'emerging' and 'established' to 'advanced' (the highest level), based on international benchmarks.³ The SABER programme had not developed an instrument for curriculum and materials, and PaBER contracted an international consultant to design an instrument using the SABER methodology and rubrics for easy comparability. This approach of ranking from latent to advanced was also used in some of the other instruments used in PaBER. Ranking is not explicitly used/referred to in this report, but it sits behind the analysis.

A more extensive description of the governance structures, the methodologies and the tools used can be found in Annex 1 to this report.

FINAL RESULTS

Through this approach, PaBER has provided a breadth and depth of evidence for each domain on policy and policy delivery, including how institutional and staff capacity influences the implementation of policy. The purpose of this report, and final reports for the other pilot countries, is to pull together the evidence from the three components, what we are learning across the five domains and how they intersect, and from this to set out strategic recommendations that will impact on learning outcomes. This report looks at the specifics of the PaBER pilot within Solomon Islands. An associated regional report takes a broader look at trends across the

three countries and draws conclusions around how this approach could be used more broadly in the region.

This final analysis and report has been accomplished through a triangulation process whereby the multitudes of findings drawn from each of the reports (there were over 40 individual documents) that have been tabled throughout the project were cross-tabulated. From that evidence, country-specific key findings were identified and articulated for each domain in an iterative process carried out in a workshop format, involving country representatives working with a regional PaBER team. The workshop was an opportunity to identify and analyse key cross-cutting themes for each country that encapsulated the evidence from the PaBER project. Working from these themes, recommendations were developed. The recommendations connect directly back to the evidence gathered and provide the beginning of a way forward for the countries in addressing the findings of the PaBER pilot project.

It is important to recognise that the various research tools, structured around the five domains (or areas of an education system), are not linked by an overarching framework. There is no theory of change which links the analysis, but rather the tools were developed to look at each domain as a contributing factor towards learning outcomes. However, a starting premise for the broader analysis set out in this report was that effective education systems are oriented towards supporting and improving what happens in the classroom. The teacher is the point at which the student comes in to contact with the education system. So, while recognising the complexity of the broader system, and the need for strong institutions and processes at each level, the analysis in this report has aimed to draw out as a priority an understanding of how country systems support and ensure the quality of classroom teaching and learning. While drawing together this analysis, it became clear that there are critical ways in which different parts of the system (or domains) need to interact and align to impact on learning.

The recommendations included in this report aim to speak to these issues and help decision makers to formulate action that will work systemically.

³ The What, Why and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), April 2013.

In addition to these final reports, there is a body of work that has arisen from PaBER consisting of individual country reports and cross country analysis reports on the specific components and policy domains (see Annex 2 for full list). These include detailed findings and recommendations in each domain, some of which have already been integrated into education planning in the pilot countries, and represent an important resource for on-going and future work in these areas.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

The PaBER pilot project has achieved several outcomes, both intended and unintended, over the four years of its implementation. In addition to diagnoses of Year 6 students' performance in literacy and numeracy, establishment of national benchmarks in key policy domains, and the generation of a substantive body of evidence to inform and facilitate whole-of-systems educational change, the project has produced a methodology and a set of contextualised tools to support benchmarking work in the Pacific. The principle of transparency that was key to the project has ensured that frank and open discussion has occurred at each workshop and meeting throughout the project. This spirit of sharing and collaboration has opened the door to learning from one another and has gone a long way to break down the barriers that have prevented ministries of education from sharing results and practices in the past.

The PaBER pilot project, like any other project, has limitations that should be kept in mind when looking at the results. The project was designed to look at evidence to inform policy and planning with a view to improving student learning. The evidence is being presented now, at the end of the project. While findings and recommendations in the individual domains have already begun to have impact on national planning and practice, the intent was not to have implemented everything by the end of PaBER but rather to have the evidence in place for the next steps in national education planning. In addition, although the aim of PaBER holds improvement of student literacy and numeracy at its core, the pilot project did not expect to impact on student learning levels during the data collection and analysis phase that was the pilot. The impacts on student learning levels will be apparent over time as the

recommendations are acted upon to produce lasting system improvements.

PaBER has developed from an idea into a significant body of evidence that has the potential to make a real difference in education systems and student learning outcomes across the PaBER pilot countries. The body of evidence can support decisions regarding education systems and education policy. Not only have the findings identified or confirmed areas in which to focus priorities, the evidence gathered from multiple sources during the pilot quantifies those findings and suggests what should be monitored for sustained improvement over time. The tools and methodologies that have come out of PaBER can be utilised by others to undertake similar work and the findings of the pilot project can inform ministries, development partners and the broader education community at work in the Pacific as we collectively work to achieve high quality education for all students.



BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The Solomon Islands has a population of just over half a million people (531,000 in 2010), spread over around 90 populated islands across the archipelago. The population growth rate is around 2.5 per cent, one of the highest in the world. 40 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age. There are 66 vernacular languages. The official language and language of instruction is English.

Economically, more than 75 per cent of the labour force is engaged in subsistence farming or fishing. The country is rich in natural resources, including timber and commodities such as canned tuna, palm oil, copra, and cocoa. The country is home to pockets of underdeveloped minerals, including lead, zinc, nickel and gold. The Central Bank estimates a 2.9 per cent rate of economic growth in 2016.

There is a challenging environment for service delivery in Solomon Islands with weak infrastructure and institutional capacity constraints at all levels. Only 8 percent of the population has access to broadband or internet services, which is very slow, expensive, and unreliable. The majority of schools do not have access to electricity and communications, directly impacting educational services in the country. Although initiatives are being undertaken to provide speedy and affordable internet connections, access to rural areas still poses a significant challenge

There are 507 primary schools with a student enrolment of 125,298 and a teaching workforce of about 5,000 (PAR 2014). There are 175 secondary schools with a student

enrolment of 47,050 and a teaching workforce of about 2,000. Basic education refers to the first nine years of formal education: from year 1 to Year 9 (formally called Form 1 to 3 in the junior secondary school). Primary school children take the Solomon Islands Secondary Entrance examination (SISE) at Year 6. Under new proposals, SISE will be abolished and all children will have access to nine years of free basic education.

Since 2004, MEHRD receives national government and external support through its sector wide programme. Through this programme MEHRD's management of the formal education system is being strengthened. Initiatives include up-dated school infrastructure, a school grants policy and fee free education, training of untrained teachers by Distance Education, pilots in vernacular to increase access and the quality of education, and revised curriculum and the distribution of text books and teaching aids to primary schools.

Table 3. Selected Education Indicators for Solomon Islands⁴

INDICATOR	2012	2014
Net enrolment rate, primary/basic	89.5%	88.4%
Completion rate, primary/basic	48.8%	63.5%
Pupil -teacher ratio, primary/basic	22.7%	23.2%
Qualified teachers, primary/basic (per cent)	61.1%	68.7%

⁴ MEHRD, World Bank, UNESCO

Gender parity index, primary/basic	0.98%	0.97%
Public expenditure on education as per cent of total government expenditure	24.5%	29.6%
Public expenditure on education as per cent of GDP	8.7 %	12.3%

Solomon Islands did not achieve MDG2 by 2015 despite improvement over the long term and

considerable resources devoted into education sector by the government and development partners.

There has been a drop in NER in primary education from prep to Year 6 from 91.2 per cent (2010) to 88.4 per cent (2014) as shown in Table 1. The primary completion rate has risen from just under 50 per cent to over 63 per cent.

While the recent introduction of a fee-free policy is likely to bring a further increase in enrolment rates, there are clear challenges in retaining the children enrolled so that they complete the nine years of the basic education cycle. Many children who enrol in school fail to complete their education, dropping out due to factors relating to school and family circumstances. Absenteeism is a serious problem in Solomon Islands and is a precursor to dropping out of school. On the positive side, the GPI is 0.97 (2014).

Additionally, the percentage of qualified teachers is still a concern, though there has been an improvement from 54.5 per cent (2007) to 68.7 per cent (2014). Female teachers in primary education still form the larger share of the unqualified teachers. The Ministry therefore invests heavily in the preparation of training of unqualified teachers by distance mode.

Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy assessment (PILNA) results complement the literacy and numeracy situations found in the Solomon Islands Standardized Test of Achievement (SISTA). SISTA results are generally consistent with previous SISTA assessments and PILNA. It is evident that more students in year 6 from Solomon Islands are performing at a satisfactory and expected level in numeracy (80.7 per cent) compared to literacy (40.6 per cent). Girls are performing slightly

better in literacy compared to boys at the satisfactory and expected literacy level. Boys however are performing slightly better than girls in numeracy.

Students attending urban schools are performing better than those attending non-urban schools in both numeracy and literacy. Likewise, students attending non-government schools are performing better in literacy compared to government schools' student but are performing equally well in numeracy. With the sub-strand in literacy, year six students are performing better in Reading comprehension and language than in writing especially those performing at the satisfactory and expected level. It is reiterated that writing component of literacy is still a challenge to year 4 and 6 students in Solomon Islands.

However, the achievement disparity within subgroups relatively remains a challenge especially between Government and Non-government schools. From the evidence available, MERHD now uses assessment data to inform the different policy reforms and that affects the whole system of educational change and school improvement. For instance, a literacy policy and school literacy strategy has been developed both at the national and provincial level. The establishment of the literacy programme management unit (LPMU) aims to direct, manage and support the development of literacy programme to improve literacy outcomes at the school level for year 1-3. The implementation of the literacy programme is supported by Education Authorities in the provinces.

The MEHRD has recently undergone significant reforms in the last years. The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) is guided in policy by its Education Strategic Framework (ESF) 2007-2015 and, now it has a new adopted longer term Education Strategic Framework 2016-2030. The ESF 2016-2030, aligns to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that reflects the national priorities. This new ESF 2016-2030 guides the new National Education Action Plan (NEAP) 2016-2020 which has an annual implementation plan.

A policy document specifically focussed on Basic Education has been a recent development – the Policy Statement and Guidelines for Basic Education in the Solomon Islands 2009. Also other recent policies such as Policy statement and Guidelines for Learners Assessment in Schools (2010), Policy Statement and Guidelines for Procurement, Distribution and Storage of Curriculum Resources (2009), National Curriculum Statement (2010) and The Policy Statement and Guidelines for Teacher Development and Education (2009) focus mainly on Basic Education.

MEHRD has carried out a major organisational restructure to ensure that accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in Education service delivery is practiced. This involved consolidating departments into four service focussed groups - Corporate services, National Education Services, EA Services and Strategic support unit (SSU). The SSU is responsible for policy development, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting at the strategic level.

The Education Authority (EA) restructure ensures a strong alignment between the central ministry and the EAs.



FINDINGS BY DOMAIN

This section sets out some key findings coming out of the PaBER project. As stated earlier in this report, PaBER has generated a significant amount of evidence structured around five domains: Teacher Quality, Curriculum and Materials, Assessment Systems (student assessment), School Governance and Management, and the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The analysis below draws on the evidence from each of the domains. This analysis identified areas where the evidence was strongest, where weaknesses identified through research may represent critical bottlenecks, and where there were clear implications for improving learning outcomes. Teams from each of the pilot countries, ensured findings could also respond to stated country policy priorities. The more in-depth analysis provided in the source reports is an important resource for more detailed work in each of these areas which could not be fully captured in this higher level summary analysis.

The analysis below aims where possible to capture the extent to which policy is in place, the difference between policy intent and the reality of delivery at school level, and where we have it, and understanding of how institutional and staff capacity influence this dynamic. Where appropriate the analysis also provides updates where specific action has been taken to respond to some of these findings in the period since the research was undertaken. It should also be noted that key findings discussed here include some overlap across the five domains. This is a representation of the separate analyses undertaken, but also serves to highlight the interaction

between these domains. This is drawn out more fully in the analysis of cross cutting themes.

TEACHER QUALITY

DOMAIN CONTEXT

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) is responsible for setting education goals and controlling the national curriculum through the Education Strategic Framework, which provides the vision, goals and strategies for the education sector. Teacher education and development is guided by the National Teacher Education and Development Policy Statement (2008) under the Teacher Training and Development Division. Teachers' conditions of service, in which teachers are employed, are guided by the Teaching Service Handbook (2011) which also stipulates the rights and obligations of teachers and their Education Authorities.

The National Curriculum Statement (2011) provides a framework for meeting national learning and teaching expectations. In addition, individual syllabi by subject provide greater detail in an outcome based format. Salary for teaching staff is managed at the central level. Salaries for teachers are paid in accordance with the Scheme of Services under the Unified Salary Structure. The Education Authority has complete autonomy over the appointment, deployment, and transfer of teaching staff; however the MEHRD sets standards and entry requirements for teaching staff.

KEY FINDINGS

Global research indicates the central importance of teacher quality in ensuring improved student learning. PaBER research aimed to assess how the Solomon Islands education system recruits and deploys good quality teachers, equips them with the skills and knowledge they need, and keeps them motivated, performing and improving over time. The PaBER process yielded a range of findings in the Teacher Quality domain. Here we pull out three key findings and explore the underpinning evidence.

KEY FINDING 1: MEHRD may not be attracting the most talented candidates into teaching profession due to having low minimum entry requirements to the profession.

In Solomon Islands, teachers are required to have only a minimal level of post-secondary education; a one-year certification program or an undergraduate diploma specific to teaching. This is lower than that required by the most effective education systems. This may limit how the profession attracts more qualified candidates. This is partly off-set by reasonable levels of pay, compared to per capita GDP.

Working conditions can play an important role in the decision to become a teacher. Talented candidates who have opportunities in other professions, may be discouraged from becoming teachers if working conditions are difficult or unpleasant. MEHRD has national infrastructure requirements for its schools, however there is no data to indicate that school infrastructure is monitored closely.

KEY FINDING 2: Professional development of teachers at national and school level is inconsistent and insufficient for the needs of teachers, in part due to the lack of clear policy guidance.

According to the Teacher Education and Development Policy Statements (2008), teachers are not required to participate in formal induction programmes upon appointment, nor professional development throughout their careers. There is no evidence that professional development in Solomon Islands is collaborative or that it focuses on instructional improvement or uses the

most effective methods of delivery. Teacher professional development at national level is formally assigned based on perceived needs. Providing the same professional development to all teachers is an inefficient way to improve instructional practice. In addition, the policy lacks to mention professional development with a focus on curriculum delivery or literacy and numeracy instruction.

At school level, based on PaBER research findings, many schools have formal plans for the provision of professional development, however much of the professional development focusses on “leadership”. Furthermore, not all teachers participate in the professional development and many teachers and principals need to meet their own costs to attend training. This may discourage teachers and principals to participate.

Even though, teachers’ tasks are officially stipulated, there is no specific guidance on the percentage of time teachers should allocate to tasks such as professional development, supervising students, grading assessments, and standing in for absent teachers. Non-teaching time allocated to training, mentoring, collaborating with other teachers can make teaching time much more effective and meaningful.

KEY FINDING 3: Assessment results and teacher performance appraisal are not used effectively to guide improvement in teaching and learning.

Systems are in place to assess student learning nationally and at the classroom level. However, national standardised assessments are not able to provide information to teachers that will help target the needs of their students. The audit of teachers on classroom assessment indicates a lack of capacity among teachers to use this effectively to adapt instruction. The audit also found that teachers assess students’ knowledge of the content but do not use data to improve teaching and learning. Classroom assessment is used in a summative form.

Another aspect of the monitoring of teaching and learning, internal and external systems is in place to evaluate teacher performance. Teacher evaluations are conducted on three levels: self-evaluation; principal evaluations; and, external evaluations by school authorities using nationally defined standards. These

practices are inconsistent and vary significantly across schools. In addition, PaBER research indicates that a majority of the teachers are not aware of the national standards.

SUMMARY

There are some clear strengths on which to build the system for managing and supporting teachers in the Solomon Islands. The key challenges lie in attracting high quality candidates into the profession, and ensuring that pre- and in-service training addresses their needs in terms of knowledge and skills needed to deliver the curriculum, assess student progress and adjust teaching to meet student needs. There is a key role for school principals, and while there is some indication that they perform some functions, their capacity to provide instructional leadership and effective performance management of teachers requires more attention.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

DOMAIN CONTEXT

In line with the vision of the MEHRD for education in the Solomon Islands, that of providing “quality education for everyone in the Solomon Islands”, the policy document Solomon Islands Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools (2010) sets out the overall vision of the MEHRD to develop and implement ‘a comprehensive assessment system for learners in all sub-sectors of education.

Under the current assessment regime, the National Examinations and Standards Unit (NESU) is tasked with the implementation of several high stake examinations; at end of Year 6 (Solomon Islands Secondary Entrance), end of Year 9 (Solomon Islands Form 3), end of Year 11 (Solomon Islands School Certificate) and end of Year 12 (Solomon Islands National Form 6 Certificate). In addition, NESU is also responsible for the implementation of a national large-scale assessment (SISTA) administered at end of Years 4 and 6. Solomon Islands also takes part in a regional large scale assessment (PILNA) at the end of Years 4 and 6.

KEY FINDINGS

PaBER research into student assessment in Solomon Islands has looked at the effectiveness of systems at the school / classroom, national and international levels and how these are used to improve learning outcomes. At the national level, this analysis has looked at both examinations and large-scale system assessments. These different types of assessment all play different but important roles. A significant focus of PaBER work in this area looked at capacity at different levels to implement assessments and use the results. Analysis of the emerging evidence has identified three key findings directly relating to assessment in Solomon Islands.

KEY FINDING 1: Classroom assessment policies do not adequately guide effective and consistent implementation or use of assessment results across schools.

PaBER research points to the importance of classroom assessment to influence teaching as well as student learning. While assessment policy documents make reference to classroom assessment, they fail to provide clear guidelines on implementation at the classroom level, monitoring the quality of the assessment and use of the results to improve teaching and learning. Consequently, the way teachers conduct classroom assessment varies significantly between schools/classrooms, and there are inconsistencies in how the results are used to improve learning by stakeholders within the school (students, teachers, school leaders) and outside the school (parents, school boards and community).

KEY FINDING 2: The skills and competencies of teachers to effectively carry out classroom assessments vary considerably, limiting the use of the results to provide effective intervention for improving student learning.

The effectiveness of classroom assessment is influenced by teacher knowledge, and the resources at their disposal, as well as their level of competency in identifying and using the most appropriate method. This leads to teachers using only the methods they are comfortable and competent with such as paper and pen tests, despite issues relating to the validity of the assessment, at the expense of other more appropriate assessments such as portfolios.

Evidence from the Solomon Islands research indicates that teachers use various methods of assessment in class, though with an emphasis on summative assessment, which report students' scores and rank order, rather than on their achievement and progress on the learning continuum. This restricts teachers' ability to use the results of the assessment (scores) to provide the appropriate targeted intervention. Additionally, teachers do not have access to the necessary resources to be able to successfully carry out the assessment in the classroom. There are limited pre- and in-service training opportunities to support teachers to carry out classroom assessment effectively and to use the results of the assessment to improve teaching and learning. This may impact on delivery.

KEY FINDING 3: The lack of an overarching policy for the national large scale assessment (SISTA), and limited capacity in the assessment unit (NESU) limit the effective implementation and dissemination of results.

SISTA is well aligned to the curriculum, and there is reference to SISTA in 'Solomon Islands Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners' Assessment in Schools' (2010). However, the lack of specific policy to guide implementation may be limiting its effectiveness. There are no mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of the assessment as well as to allow for the monitoring of the standard of literacy and numeracy in Solomon Islands against national baseline standards. There is also no system to guide the dissemination and use of the results of SISTA by different stakeholders from policy level to teachers in the classroom.

NESU plays a critical role in student assessment in Solomon Islands. Evidence from this research has highlighted that NESU is understaffed and its staff do not possess the technical assessment skills at the level expected particularly in the areas of instruments development, data analysis and reporting.

SUMMARY

Solomon Islands has in place the key elements of an assessment system at the classroom, national and international levels. The national large-scale assessment has been running for 13 years and is well aligned to the

curriculum. However, to fulfil the priorities set out in the National Education Action Plan (NEAP 2013-2015), enhancing the role of assessment in improving student learning, a number of weaknesses should be addressed. The research indicates that there are limitations in how policy guides the specific delivery and use of classroom and national assessments, and equally staff capacity at national and school levels is limiting the use of assessments to improve learning.

THE CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS

DOMAIN CONTEXT

The MEHRD determines what is taught and what materials and resources are used, and how they are procured. There is an established policy framework to provide clear guidance on the roles of stakeholders, the content of the outcomes based curriculum and the focus on literacy as a curriculum priority. The Education Act (1978) and the Education Strategic Framework (2007-15) articulate the government expectations for education and designate English as the language of instruction with a multilingual approach recommended. The National Curriculum Statement (2012) provides the principles and the scope and sequence framework for curriculum as well as setting literacy and numeracy as a priority within education. Curriculum and resources is one of five key areas highlighted as needing attention in the National Literacy Policy Statement (2013). The policy documents provide guidance for the development of curriculum materials and for the assessment and reporting of student outcomes against curriculum, although without specifics as to how each of these are to be accomplished.

KEY FINDINGS

PaBER research set out to identify how well policies provide guidance on what should be taught, how it should be delivered and assessed, and how these processes should be evaluated, monitored and reviewed. Field research gathered evidence on how curriculum and materials policies have been implemented at the school level to support the school learning environment.

Here we pull out three key findings and explore the underpinning evidence.

KEY FINDING 1: Procurement and quality assurance of curriculum materials are broadly stated in policy but lack specific direction for implementation and guidance for monitoring implementation.

The findings in the area of procurement and quality assurance of curriculum materials highlighted a disconnection between the policy and legislative documents and the practices that are occurring in schools. In the policy documents, the development and procurement of curriculum materials in both English and vernacular languages is clearly defined, as is the development of materials to support literacy and numeracy. Policy documents also outline the process for quality assurance of curriculum materials as part of the curriculum development process. Under the current system, materials are produced and distributed to schools once a year and if needed and budget allows, additional resources may be made available. These resources have been quality assured at the development stage but research revealed that while teachers may have access to these resources, schools have little or no capacity to evaluate them and ensure their quality in aligning with the curriculum outcomes.

The field research component of the PaBER process also revealed that although curriculum documents in English and mathematics are generally available in schools, they are often lacking in other subjects. Similarly, although textbooks are generally available in schools, most schools are lacking a reasonable range of other support materials.

KEY FINDING 2: The assessment and reporting of student learning, including performance of the curriculum, is well articulated in policy. Practice however, shows that implementation is inconsistent across schools, teachers are not confident in using curriculum outcomes to assess student learning, and reporting of student achievement is limited to final grades.

Assessment and reporting of results at the classroom, school and national level is addressed in curriculum policy documents but in the form of simple guidelines or mentioned as expectations as opposed to specific

directives. Even though the curriculum is learner-centred and competency based, student achievement in the classroom is typically reported in the form of grades and class placement rather than as progress against the outcomes of the curriculum. The reasons for this difference between the stated intent of curriculum policy and the practice as it exists in the classroom is supported by findings that show a gap in capacity at both the school and the ministry levels.

While teachers are very confident about their assessment plans, there is little evidence that teachers are able to apply assessment criteria, and monitor the student learning that is occurring. At the ministry level, the capacity of the National Examinations and Standards Unit to deliver the objectives laid out in the policy document is severely limited by the technical capacity of the staff and may be a factor in explaining why the policy intent around assessment of curriculum outcomes does not translate into implementation and practice.

KEY FINDING 3: Teacher competency in the implementation of the curriculum is generally supported through professional development and monitored through the national professional standards for teachers, although not all teachers understand this. Policy however, does not mandate the focus of professional development, and hence, only benefits some teachers.

Teacher competency standards are laid out under the National Professional Standards for Teachers and competency guidelines are also defined for pre-service teachers however these are not yet part of policy. These standards are not well-known by principals and as a result, very few are using them for planning professional development for teachers. Even though many (but not all) schools have professional development plans in place and there is a variety of professional development available to some teachers, the policies do not identify where professional development should be targeted. As such there are needs for in-service teacher training in literacy and numeracy instruction, in the use of curriculum resources and materials and in classroom based assessment of curriculum outcomes, none of which are mandated in any way through policy.

The end result is that the professional development opportunities, when they are available to teachers are not well aligned with the needs of teachers as they relate to literacy, numeracy, assessment and reporting and teachers do not always take advantage of the professional development that is available. Finally, although the national policies mandate that English is the language of instruction and prioritize literacy and numeracy, there are no requirements within the teacher competency standards to ensure that teachers are personally competent in numeracy or in English.

SUMMARY

This review has shown that policy documents provide a fairly comprehensive framework to govern the development of curriculum and effective provision of materials. However, the research has identified two areas in which the policy intent and policy implementation are out of alignment. The first misalignment results from a lack of specific direction in policy documents – general principles are articulated for assessment of student learning and for professional development of teachers but the documents stop short of providing directives as to how student assessment and reporting should be carried out or how to determine the focus of professional development to improve teaching and learning.

The second misalignment between policy intent and actual practice results from a lack of capacity among teachers, school leaders and ministry staff. That teachers and school leaders are unaware of the professional standards, that teachers are not able to assess student learning to report against achievement of curriculum outcomes and the lack of technical capacity to support assessment at the ministry level all reveal gaps in capacity that are standing in the way of implementing the policies as intended.

Addressing the need for more specifics in policy documents and simultaneously addressing the capacity issues at all levels will help to bring the policy intent into practice and by doing so, set the system on a course for improvement.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

DOMAIN CONTEXT

The Education Act in Solomon Islands provides the legal framework for school governance and operations in all schools. The Education Authorities (EA) own and run the schools and responsibilities are decentralized to school authorities. The EA has complete autonomy over the appointment, deployment, and transfer of teaching staff while the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) sets standards and entry requirements for teaching staff. The management of non-teaching staff is not adequately documented in policy or legislation. The MEHRD has a Policy Statement and Guidelines for Grants to Schools in Solomon Islands (2012) and the School Financial Management Guidelines and Manual (2009) which establish specific requirements at the school level pertaining to the development and execution of the school budget.

Solomon Islands carries out school and student assessments, which are supported by policies and guidelines to evaluate the effectiveness of the education system. The MEHRD *Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learner's Assessment in Schools* focuses on how to implement standardized student assessments but does not provide guidelines for the use of results.

There is a strong Community-School Committee partnership and involvement in setting the vision and strategic direction for schools through the Whole School Development Plan. The School Committee is representative of the school and community and is established through a transparent, democratic approach for three-year terms.

KEY FINDINGS

School Governance and Management covers a number of areas which are central to the provision of education and learning. The first area covers the degree to which management and operational functions are handled. This includes personnel issues and use of material and financial resources. Second, assessment of schools, particularly performance, together with measuring

students learning outcomes forms an important part of the responsibilities of the principal. The third and final area looks at the role of the community in the management of the school. Evidence collected against these areas provided the following key findings.

KEY FINDING 1: There is a lack of policy at central level to support school autonomy (school governance and operations).

As noted above the Education Authority has complete autonomy over personnel management of teaching staff. While the Education Act provides a legal framework for school operations but there is no policy specific to school governance and operations which makes it difficult for principals to consistently carry out the school functions. MEHRD oversees the grants policy, which includes school operations and use of financial resources.

The principals, in collaboration with the community, prepare and execute the operational budget and raise additional funds. To this end most principals have received training on financial administration but with less focus on school management. Principals are also receiving training in other important areas including use of assessments, EMIS and pedagogical support. There is little evidence of evaluations of principals' performance as school leaders.

There was no evidence gathered on two important considerations in school governance. First, it is not known if principals have full- or part-time teaching responsibilities in the schools. Significant teaching loads would impact on their ability to carry out their functions, regardless of their capacity. Second, no evidence was gathered on the monitoring of teaching hours as prescribed in the curriculum. Students could be receiving greatly reduced teaching through late starts and early closures each term. In addition, schools often close for exam periods leaving non-exam grades with no teaching. Finally, student and teacher absenteeism reduces the teaching time.

KEY FINDING 2: There is limited use of assessment results for school and management decisions. This is compounded in that mechanisms are not well established to enable stakeholders to demand accountability through use of school and student assessment results.

Both school and standardized student assessments exist in Solomon Islands and results can be used to inform and enhance pedagogy and school operations, however the policy does not provide specific guidelines. The guidelines would be crucial where principals and teachers have low capacity. Principals and teachers are aware that school assessment can be used to adjust school practices and management. While use of school assessments for making school adjustments is emerging, there is little evidence of schools using these assessments to inform management decisions. In addition, there is limited monitoring of schools or teachers' assessment plans in terms of accountability.

In the area of student assessment, most schools reported a final grading which was a combination of course work and an examination and reported as the student's position in class. Principals and teachers complained that the requirement to develop and administer numerous tests to meet the continuous assessment required by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources was time-consuming. In their views more time should be devoted to teaching.

Results of learning assessments should be shared with Education Authorities (EAs), schools, and parents. Even though there is a need for the use of assessment data to inform teaching, there is no requirement or policies for the student assessment results to be simplified, explained and publicised. Principals and teachers are aware that school assessment can be used to adjust learning and teaching approaches. But the practice of making use of standardised student assessment to make management decisions is not widespread. It is often the case that the results are not analysed at the school level. This has led to missed opportunities.

KEY FINDING 3: There is lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of school committees and community.

Most schools have a functioning School Board, but the establishment of parent associations is less widespread. Most boards are aware of and can list responsibilities, but these vary across schools and often includes responsibilities outside policy guidelines. There are guidelines and procedures for school committee participation in budget planning/ preparation, however the extent to which the community is involved in budget

planning is unclear. Finally, the School Committee does not have a voice on matters such as learning inputs or curriculum.

SUMMARY

The policy framework for school governance and management in the Solomon Islands does not adequately cover two key areas of school autonomy or clear roles and responsibilities for strong community participation in the management of schools. This has understandably led to inconsistent implementation by school principals and school committees. The policies governing school and student assessment are stronger but there are not sufficiently detailed guidelines and capacity to implement the assessments. School assessments are rarely used to make operational or management decisions and equally rare is the use of student learning assessments to adjust and improve teaching.

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

DOMAIN CONTEXT

The value of EMIS as the key source of information for management and decision-making purposes is articulated in the National Education Action Plans (NEAP-2004 – 2015), Solomon Islands Grant Programme (2012), and the Statistics Act (1970). These underline the importance of collecting quality data to assess progress in the education sector, allocation of grants and the important role of EMIS in informing decision-making. NEAP plans have repeatedly mentioned the value of EMIS in education planning.

Solomon Islands has developed a functioning EMIS that uses a PINEAPPLES (Pacific Island Nation Evaluation Analysis Policy and Planning Leveraging Education Statistics) system. EMIS is currently supported through donor funding.

KEY FINDINGS

PaBER research has assessed the institutional arrangements that support the effective functioning,

the soundness of data systems (e.g. collection, analysis, reporting and quality assurance), and the use of EMIS for decision-making. This work provides a basis for identifying the successes and challenges affecting EMIS in Solomon Islands and for proposing actionable and strategic directions to support future improvements in EMIS. From this evidence base, the following three key findings are highlighted.

Key finding 1: Operations of EMIS have been established but are not supported and guided by a comprehensive EMIS policy

While good progress has been made in the establishment of an EMIS, there are no official policies and guidelines in place to guide EMIS processes, procedures and allocation of resources. NEAP 2013-15 made references for the need to improve data quality at all levels and key developments required in EMIS in improving quality of data and arrangements to designate a Unit to oversee operations of EMIS. The absence of EMIS policy guidelines on resource allocation and the lack of a dedicated budget-line for EMIS operations has made planning difficult for the EMIS Unit. PINEAPPLES activities have been largely donor-funded and since the project ended, it has been difficult to cover maintenance, operations and upgrading costs. The EMIS team are currently under the Planning, Coordinating and Research Unit are being supported by the Unit's budget. The lack of a policy and a dedicated budget is limiting the operational autonomy of the EMIS Unit and its ability to plan for longer term development and sustainability of the EMIS.

The absence of EMIS policy guidelines may be limiting the effectiveness of key data processes and systems (e.g. the collection, management, quality assurance and dissemination of data), impacting on the quality of data collected from schools. Findings from PaBER indicate that there are no validation mechanisms at the local or central level to monitor the quality of data entered into the system. The entire process from collection to reporting took thirteen to sixteen months. Response rates are very low due largely to geographical widespread of schools with rural schools having consistent poor return rates. Low returns rates delayed publication of the Performance Assessment Report as data are verified and validated before it is published every two years. Schools

have also been known to submit inflated enrolment data to receive more grants. These are challenges which require a comprehensive solution, set out in a clear overarching policy.

KEY FINDING 2: EMIS data is not being fully utilised by stakeholders for school and system planning and management or informing policy decisions.

EMIS data have not been fully utilised by key stakeholders of education in the Solomon Islands. MEHRD is the primary stakeholder that uses EMIS data, however, this is limited to the allocation of school grants. MEHRD also publishes its Performance Assessment Report (PAR) on its website every two years, however internet accessibility and connectivity make it impossible for key stakeholders such as principals, teachers and parents to access this information and use it for planning or other purposes.

Schools are actively reporting data but rarely receiving any feedback. Lack of internet access and limited communication and training prevent most stakeholders outside of the national government from accessing and using EMIS. They are unaware of and/or unable to access the website. For schools with no internet or weak internet link, a two-page feedback report is sent by MEHRD at the end of data cycle. However, findings indicated that schools rarely use these to support their planning as many of these reports are received well after a year after the data cycle.

Local education authorities do not have access to EMIS data, preventing them from using this when carrying out inspection and monitoring of schools. Given that local education authorities have limited access to EMIS data, MEHRD's priority to improve quality of education data will take some time to realise.

KEY FINDING 3: There are capacity and technical constraints in the operations of EMIS.

PaBER research and analysis indicates that the EMIS Unit is under-staffed. The Unit is managed by a staff of three who carry out all activities from dispatch of school census forms, entering of data into the system to reporting of EMIS data. Data are manually entered into the system but system lacks mechanisms to identify any

coding, editing and tabulation errors resulting in months to complete data entry.

Regular training is required for EMIS staff on data quality assurance processes. The EMIS system has no established mechanisms in place to ensure regular auditing and confidentiality of data. The absence of these mechanisms and low staff skills to identify data errors could compromise the quality and outputs of data collected from EMIS. Findings also indicated that EMIS staff have basic skills in the use of pivot tables to do analysis and reporting but lack skills in using more advanced statistical software like STATA and SPSS to undertake more advanced analysis. Data presented in PAR covers key data disaggregated by age, gender, schools, and districts, but does not report projections and estimations in enrolments which are useful for planning and decision-making purposes.

EMIS is a comprehensive system but many features have not been used by EMIS staff due to lack of confidence, skills and knowledge. A lengthy 800-pages user guide to support operations of EMIS is hardly read by staff. This calls for more specialized training for the Unit in the areas of database management, communications and quality assurance to improve quality of outputs.

The lack of support by government to provide ongoing professional development for EMIS staff is an area of concern. Staff training is mostly donor-driven and focuses on skills needed to perform basic operations in EMIS. Ad hoc trainings have also been conducted by SPC and UNESCO, usually to enable EMIS to report on regional and international indicators. However, no specialized courses have been put in place to target technical skills needs of EMIS staff within MEHRD, raising questions around the future growth and sustainability of EMIS.

SUMMARY

PaBER research points to an EMIS system at a crossroads in its development. Basic operations and the foundations for a more effective system are established, but MEHRD and partners face some key decisions around how to shape and direct the future development and funding for EMIS. A policy has yet to be developed to guide its operations, data collection, analysis and reporting processes, and the mobilisation and use of

resources to support EMIS. Under-utilization of data for planning and decision-making is common across all stakeholders of education. Schools which are not benefitting from the EMIS, which has largely being used by the central level only. Staff shortages and capacity limitations in the EMIS Unit are also holding back the development of EMIS to undertake more advanced analysis and reporting of data to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

PaBER adopted an ambitious scope of analysis across the education system. The five domains were selected in



CROSS-CUTTING ANALYSIS



recognition of their important role as enabling inputs to improving the quality of education. In planning reform, each of these areas can be seen as to some extent closed, self-reinforcing systems. So, in addressing teacher quality, we cannot only look at in-service professional development, or the preparation teachers receive on recruitment. Teacher quality is also influenced by the quality of candidates entering the profession, the conditions under which they work, and how they are motivated and supported to perform. A teacher also needs to work in a well-managed school, the operational parameters of which vary from country to country. We know that to contribute to learning, a good school needs a degree of managerial autonomy, to use assessment to inform teaching practice and inform the training of teachers, and to use results to ensure accountability to stakeholders locally and higher up the system.

For each of the domains under PaBER, the research and analytical tools were designed with this in mind. A significant body of work has been established which can be used by policy-makers and technical staff at different levels of the system to inform planning and track progress over time. It is not possible in a summary report to capture the breadth of this work, or do justice to some important issues. However, it is possible to draw out some clear emerging priorities. It is also possible to see that there are important ways in which these domains, or parts of the education system, interact. It is unlikely that in trying to address a shortcoming in one area without taking account of these interactions, optimal results will be achieved.

As stated in the introduction to this report, the purpose of PaBER was to focus on those areas that would impact on learning, particularly literacy and numeracy results. It has also been a guiding premise to focus on how the education system enables the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. With this in mind, this section sets out some of the cross-cutting themes, which are emerging as priorities and which in some way speak to the priorities already set out in Solomon Islands NEAP.

EMERGING THEMES AND PRIORITIES

The use of assessment, particularly classroom assessment, to inform teaching and improve learning

PaBER benchmarking and associated analysis of assessment in Solomon Islands has looked at four different types of assessment, each with different purposes. Each of these assessment types has a role to play in improving learning, whether to inform better teaching practice in the classroom, ensure a level of accountability to parents and other stakeholders, or inform policy decisions.

A key issue emerging from this work is that the enabling environment for assessment is not sufficiently in place, leading to ineffective implementation and use of results. PaBER research indicates that while there is a policy statement on assessment (2010), this does not provide clear guidance on implementation, for example on how classroom assessment should be used by teachers.

Indeed, the poor quality and use of classroom assessment has emerged as a potential bottleneck in delivering improvements in learning. There is a disconnect where the curriculum is learner centred and competency based, but classroom assessment is mostly summative and focused on ranking students. In fact, policy and curriculum guidelines recognise the role of classroom assessment in diagnosing student learning, giving them feedback and planning teaching and learning strategies, as well as providing information to parents. However, in practice we can see this is not happening, or certainly not consistently across schools.

PaBER has shown that in addition to lack of clear guidelines, the capacity of school managers, teachers and assessment staff at different levels is a key factor in the way assessment is used in class, and the broader utilisation of results by stakeholders. PaBER analysis of school governance and management shows that assessment is not being used effectively to monitor teaching and learning, inform management decisions and to drive school improvement, involving teachers, parents and others in the process. The capacity of head- teachers to do this, and the training they receive is a weak point. Indeed, the use of assessment results to inform a broader set of stakeholders, and build local accountability, is a related challenge. Research here has shown that the way assessment is used by teachers, schools and Education Authorities seems to vary considerably, and this inconsistency in implementation is a pattern we see repeated across domains. Without a stronger enabling environment and a strategy to support schools and teachers to use assessment consistently, practice will continue to vary depending on the understanding and capacity of individuals.

Inconsistent provision of teacher professional development, monitoring and support

Teacher recruitment in the Solomon Islands may not attract the best into the profession due to the relatively low entry requirements, although pay is set at a reasonable level. Preparatory training does include some practical classroom experience, though PaBER analysis indicates ways that this could be strengthened. However, given these starting points, it is clear that the limitations in provision of on-going professional development, and the associated monitoring and support given to teachers

by principals, represent a key weakness in the Solomon Islands in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning.

There are national teacher competency standards, but these are not well known by principals or teachers and do not guide the planning of professional development. At the national policy level there is a lack of clarity around how professional development should be delivered, targeted, and even the minimum annual requirements. As a result, the formal professional development that does exist is very inconsistent, and does not explicitly support such obvious priorities as classroom assessment, instructional practice, content knowledge and in particular the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Analysis also indicates professional development is not using a range of methods known to be effective, including mentoring, networks and observation. The fact that teachers may bear some of the costs of their own PD is also likely to contribute to the poor take up of opportunities that do exist.

This area of work needs attention if shortcomings identified across PaBER domains are to be addressed, including use of assessment and delivery of curriculum materials, and relies also on more effective school management, particularly the leadership and performance management provided by school principals.

The lack of teaching materials to support classroom learning highlights the need for more effective procurement and distribution systems

Recent reforms, articulated in Solomon Islands Education Strategic Plan (2016 – 2030) and the NEAP, have started to drive change in the management of the curriculum cycle, and in the system for supplying and distributing books and other curriculum materials. These reforms are based on an understanding that the existing system was inefficient and expensive. PaBER research adds support to this, and may help inform further planning and design of such reforms.

Evidence from PaBER field research shows that most schools lack supporting materials to assist students and equipping teachers to deliver the curriculum. In addition,

many teachers are unaware that documents contain guidelines on what is to be taught, the expected learning outcomes, as well as teaching strategies and advisory notes on intervention. This indicates a weakness in the procurement and distribution of materials, but also in the capacity at central and school levels to monitor this.

CONCLUSIONS

This section has highlighted three areas emerging as priorities – key areas which are under-performing, which may be acting as bottlenecks to learning improvement. Within this, and across other PaBER analyses, it is possible to see that a broader issue is the inconsistent delivery against policy, or inconsistent provision as a result of unclear policy and guidelines. Looking back to the PILNA results from 2012, set out earlier in this report and reported separately in more detail, we can see this kind of inconsistency born out in results. It is not possible to draw any lines of correlation or causality to the policy areas described and analysed by PaBER. However, it is possible that such inconsistency is linked to the variation in performance, for instance of private and public, urban and rural schools. It would seem to warrant further research and analysis into the practice and capacity in these different contexts and to look more closely at what good performing schools in Samoa are doing. It is likely though that in some cases clearer articulation of policy and associated guidance, alongside more effective monitoring and targeted support where most needed, may improve the consistency of implementation in each of these areas.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has pulled together some of the key findings across the five PaBER domains. From this, we have looked at how some of the issues interact and how this may have an impact on student learning. It needs to be reiterated that it is not possible to do full justice in this approach to the complete range of analysis across the many PaBER country and regional reports. It is, however, important to draw conclusions from all of this that can help inform action. This section therefore sets out a small number of recommendations, which draw on the country reports, seeking joined-up responses that target improvements in classroom teaching and learning processes.

Where possible, the recommendations formulated here recognise the need for clear policy to be in place, but also that, in itself, this is often insufficient to drive change. The recommendations therefore aim to promote practical efforts and action that can bring about change at different levels, also recognising from the PaBER analysis that we need to target a number of actors at the same time and focus on capacity building and institutional support where most needed. It is not suggested that these recommendations represent all that is needed to address what are often complex and inter-connected areas of system reform. They are a first step, a good place to start based on the evidence we have. It is suggested that for more detailed reform and implementation planning, the source documents are referred to for comprehensive and nuanced recommendations. Indeed, it is understood that

in some cases those recommendations have already been acted on.

The common themes identified and associated recommendations have strong direct links to student learning, and are aligned to national priorities set out in the Solomon Islands National Education Strategic Plan 2016–2030 and the new Solomon Islands National Education Action Plan (NEAP) 2016–2020.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Strengthen classroom and national assessment practice to inform teaching and learning and improve accountability.

Review, strengthen and update the policy and guidelines for assessment, covering school / classroom-based assessment and the broader national-level assessment of learning to ensure consistent implementation across schools, and ensure the use of assessment results at all levels. This review should include administration, reporting / dissemination and use of data for decision-making for SISTA, cover guidelines on the evaluation of student performance against the curriculum, and give clear direction to the use of classroom assessment. As part of the revised policy, schools should be mandated to develop assessment plans, and guidelines should be provided for monitoring this. As part of this process, consideration should be given to making assessment results public at national and subnational levels – not to shame, but to identify and better understand, through research and analysis, under-performance as well as good performance.

To improve the implementation of this assessment policy, PaBER has identified the need for support for both teachers and assessment personnel to develop their competencies in this area. **Teacher training (both in-service and pre-service) should cover classroom assessment**, including development of assessments, and analysing, reporting and communicating assessment results. Training and support for teachers should include the use of methods beyond multiple choice and information recall activities, and should be used for more formative assessment beyond student ranking. Head-teachers also need specific training in assessment to ensure they can provide leadership to teachers and can use the results from different types of assessment to inform school management decisions and instruction. As part of this, reporting mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure schools have the results of assessments and can use them.

In order to support this, and ensure more effective national assessment, **personnel at the central and provincial level need additional training** and consideration should be given to the **appropriate staffing levels** and competency needs of NESU in particular.

Expected outputs would include:

- Revised national assessment policy with fair emphasis on classroom assessment.
- School-level assessment policy framework that can further facilitate classroom assessment guidelines/manual for teachers.
- Responsible staff upskilled in the operation of large-scale and classroom assessments through on-the-job training and specific ongoing training on assessment practices.

All these recommendations are in line with the key strategies focus of the ESF 2016–2030 especially on improving learning, and the NEAP aim of reforms towards improved learning outcomes through its prioritisation under ‘Quality and Relevance of Education’. Specifically, these recommendations support the current NEAP Objective B.2 on developing a policy framework for a classroom assessment programme in schools.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Enhance teacher skills through more systematic and comprehensive professional development.

PaBER findings indicate that Solomon Islands have relatively low entry requirements for teacher training with a minimal level of postsecondary education, a one-year certification program or undergraduate diploma in teaching. It is recommended that the Government considers how to plan for increasing this over the medium term. However, in the short term, it is important that this is recognised in planning for teacher training and support.

A key priority emerging from PaBER is to address the lack of a clear policy and integrated approach to professional development programmes for teachers. **A comprehensive professional development framework** should be developed that focuses on competencies for instructional improvement, includes a range of PD approaches / methods, mandates a minimum time spent on PD annually, and incorporates a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide school-based professional development. Competency standards are needed to guide PD and ensure it is aligned to curriculum priorities, including the use of English as the language of instruction. Consideration needs to be given to the results of the multi-lingual instruction policy to adapt training quickly should this be rolled out. It is also recommended that **teachers should not bear the cost** of their own professional development.

A related recommendation is to ensure **head-teachers receive appropriate training** to provide leadership and support to teachers, particularly on improving their teaching practice and content knowledge, and that they can implement systems for teacher performance appraisal. As part of the induction of head-teachers to their role, support should be provided in line with international good practice, including mentoring and peer learning.

As part of preparing and enhancing capacity building for teachers, it is crucial that novice teachers are better prepared when entering teaching. Currently, there is a lack of coordination and clarity on providing **induction programmes** for newly appointed teachers. Hence, there is a need for induction training policy guidance to

be put in place at either central, provincial or education authority levels.

Expected outputs may include:

- Teacher professional development framework;
- Beginning teachers' induction manual;
- Head teacher skills increased to provide leadership to teachers and appraise their performance and training needs;
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanism for induction programmes;
- Familiarity of teachers and head-teachers with the National Teacher Standards.

This recommendation is aligned to the NEAP implementation plan and outputs under the objective of 'In-service teacher training that targets upgrading the technical capacity of teachers (Outcome E. 2.1).

RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop mechanisms for procurement and monitoring of learning resources.

PaBER research shows that most schools are lacking a reasonable range of curriculum support materials to enhance teaching and learning. The recommendation therefore is to **undertake a strategic review of procurement and distribution of curriculum materials** to ensure more effective distribution of high-quality learning materials to all schools and to monitor the effectiveness of the procurement process. This review should identify weak points in the preparation, provision and distribution of materials, particularly in literacy in both English and vernacular languages (in particular taking account of the pilot multi-lingual policy). The review should recognise the need for both central procurement and distribution and school-level capacity to source materials based on needs. A related recommendation is to ensure **curriculum officers at different levels are given appropriate and regular training** and support.

At school level, roles and responsibilities can be strengthened to support this. This should include **developing school-based responsibilities** to manage

and coordinate the supply of learning resources, and mandating the use of school budgets to purchase learning materials. School committees should be empowered to take an oversight role in ensuring the school has sufficient learning resources for students. This role should be part of a school management policy that clearly stipulates the roles and functions of the school committee.

These recommendations would be in line with the NEAP objective (E.3) of determining an efficient and harmonised system of procurement and distribution of education resources to schools.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Strengthen school based management functions and capacity.

In Solomon Islands, there is devolution of responsibilities to Education Authorities and schools. PaBER findings indicate that some of the barriers to policy implementation more broadly relate to issues around school management; that is, the inconsistent understanding and implementation of policy, and the roles of school principals and School Committees. **MEHRD should undertake the review and consolidation of policies establishing School Committees** and setting out their roles and responsibilities. The role of the School Committees could be strengthened and expanded, to include a role or more voice in the recruitment, transfer and management of teachers, clear responsibilities in budget / grant planning and management, and more of a voice in issues around student learning, not least the use of assessment data. This should be accompanied by a **manual setting out the operations of School Committees**, which would serve as a valuable reference guide, and by regular training to ensure consistent understanding of these responsibilities.

As set out above, for assessment and professional development, school principals need more systematic and regular training and development (e.g. mentoring, peer education) to ensure they can fulfil their responsibilities properly.

As part of this, consideration should be given to expanding the current use of Whole School Inspection as a means to ensure schools meet national standards and to equip MEHRD with data on school performance. This

can include criteria such as classroom teaching, use of assessment, effective planning and use of school grants, and engagement of communities in school management.

Expected outputs may include:

- Revised policy on school based management;
- School Committee manual and associated training;
- More regular Whole School Inspection, including a performance standards framework.

This is in line with the NEAP priority on recognising management limitations at the school level, Education Authority level, and even at the central level.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Consolidate and ensure the future development of EMIS

The PaBER country reports highlight the good progress made in establishing a functioning EMIS, particularly in terms of providing information upwards from schools to provincial and national levels. The reports outline a number of ways in which the EMIS now needs to be consolidated and its future guaranteed and planned for. These include **establishing an EMIS policy** to set out provisions for the budget; data collection, management and utilisation; integration with external databases; and professional development.

There are a number of ways EMIS can be taken forward in coming years, and this will need to be reflected in MEHRD plans. It is suggested the PaBER reports can form a starting point for planning and capacity building in this area. Some of the key areas included in this will need to be the **integration of learning assessment data**, enhanced **utilisation of data by key stakeholders** including effective feedback loops to Education Authority/school level stakeholders, data integrity checks, and **professional learning for staff**.

LESSONS LEARNED

PaBER had an ambitious agenda and a multifaceted methodology. The project attempted to go down the whole road, from formulation of policy at the national

level to implementation of policy and practices in the classroom. To a large extent, PaBER succeeded in producing a robust evidence base on the challenges in improving learning. Some key lessons emerged from the analytical work that was done along the journey. The research also opened new pathways that could be explored. The following are some of the key lessons learned that are relevant.

The research told us some things, but not everything. The field research made a valuable contribution as it gave a clearer picture of what is taking place at the school level. But it could be improved to answer key questions in more depth, and possibly to look at how policy implementation takes place at levels between the central ministry and school (local authorities / districts, etc.). There would be some value in reflecting on the tools used for capacity analysis, and looking at aspects of teacher skills other than for assessment. All of this could be considered if/when planning further roll-out and adoption.

Some schools perform better than others, but we do not know why. The PILNA results clearly showed that some schools are achieving good learning outcomes. Follow-up analysis could look at high performing schools and understand what they are doing that could be applied more broadly. According to the PILNA results, there are significant differences between public and private and urban and rural schools.

Publication and open discussion of learning outcomes can act as a wake-up call for countries – governments are acknowledging that learning is not taking place. When PaBER started there was little public sharing of what was considered ‘sensitive’ information. Most staff from ministries had a strong sense that there was a learning crisis but few actually knew how serious the situation was. The process of benchmarking against other countries can lead to more transparency, better implementation of solutions, and strong ownership. It is difficult to know if the three countries would have addressed the findings and evidence if they had not put their own weaknesses in the spotlight.

Good policies alone do not translate into good education results. The policy reports from Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands showed many areas where the three countries have established policies benchmarked against international standards. However, the learning outcomes are very poor. Policy intent provides the framework for strong education systems, but the implementation of policies must be based on proven practices that lead to better learning.

Countries want to implement reforms, but the resources and capacity are not always available. Ministries and departments of education are keen to improve their education systems and are increasingly open to seriously reviewing their weaknesses and using evidence to find solutions. There is now an abundance of findings and recommendations and the countries are embracing them, but implementation is still very weak. Implementation may be based on priority areas.

The SABER instruments and approach can give a country a solid start to assessing its education systems. The original SABER tools assessed only policy intent. There is now a recognised need to assess both policy intent and policy implementation. Otherwise, there is a serious risk that the findings from the reports could give a skewed picture of a country's education system. In addition, the tools become more reliable when a series of SABER tools are used in one country. This provides a deeper analysis of the system and a wider array of policy recommendations. The EMIS instrument underpins the data needs in a country and should be included where other tools have been implemented. New SABER tools include both policy intent and implementation.

Regional collaboration, and open exchange of best practices based on a solid evidence base can help countries better focus their resources. PaBER provided a good start on benchmarking education systems across the Pacific. The evidence provided in this report and the recommendations should help countries improve learning over time. This experience should not be lost. Future work could include: periodic tracking of the domains in the existing countries; review and revision

of the PaBER instruments and tools for other countries; and expansion of the approach to other countries in the region.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. PABER METHODOLOGY

PABER GOVERNING STRUCTURE

PaBER governing structure comprised of three layers; i) governments of the three countries (ministries of education) and SPC have overall, oversight and responsibility for PaBER; ii) a steering committee (SC) which consisted of CEOs from the respective government education ministries including the presence of the Director of EQAP and representatives from DFAT; a technical working group (TWG) comprises of country technical experts and jointly chaired by EQAP and DFAT. PaBER governing structure is shown in Figure 1 below.

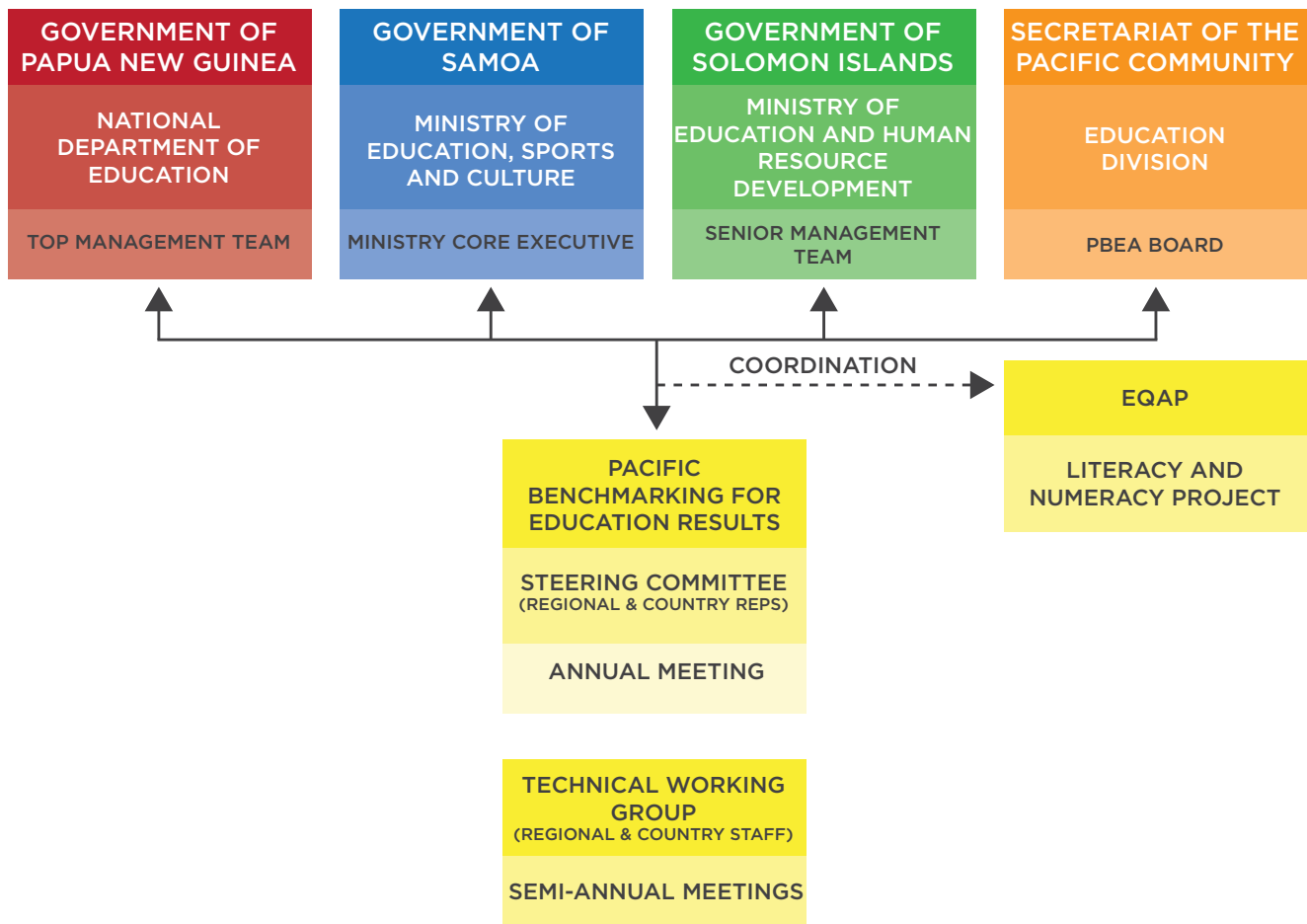


Figure 1: PaBER governing structure

The TWG has co-chairs [EQAP Director and DFAT] and meet bi-annually produce reports on annual implementation plans, monitor progress achieved on a six-monthly basis and provided budgetary updates and financial reports that are discussed and endorsed by TWG. These reports are presented to the SC for approval.

EQAP took on the role of Project Manager and played a leading role in overseeing the overall management of the program. EQAP PaBER officers provided the secretariat support and technical assistance to the countries. At the country level, each country appointed a PaBER Country Coordinator to oversee the proper implementation of

the program at the country level. This governance structure is unique to PaBER and is successfully implemented throughout its life.

PROCESSES FOR POLICY ASSESSMENT

Five policy assessments were carried out in 2013 – 2015 in Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands. Each policy assessment was carried out using the same process with the exception of the EMIS assessment. The SABER EMIS instrument was developed later by SABER and not included in the original design of PaBER. It should be noted that the Teachers, School Autonomy and Accountability, Student Assessment and Curriculum and Materials instruments were primarily looking at policy intent and not policy implementation. The EMIS instrument provides an assessment of policy intent and implementation. The process for carrying out the policy assessments is shown in Figure 2 given below.

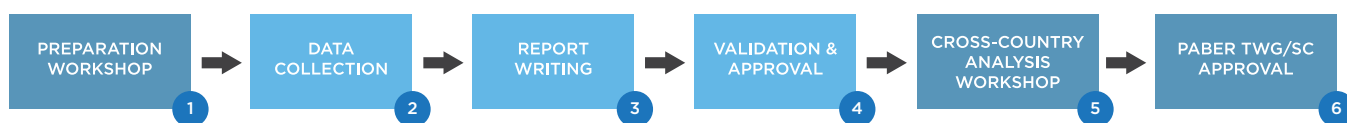


Figure 2: Policy assessment process

For each domain, a 2-3 day preparation/training workshop (Step 1) is required with key Ministry of Education staff from the relevant policy areas. The objective of the training workshops are to ensure better ownership and facilitation of the data collection, report writing and validation procedures. Consultants are usually engaged to carry out the review using the SABER framework and methodology. Additional items/questions can be included in the data collection instrument relevant to the countries' context.

The consultant along with the PaBER Assessment Officers and assistance from the local PaBER coordinators usually carry out the data collection in each country for each domain (Steps 2-4). The first part of the exercise is to collect data in-country using the agreed instruments. The draft reports are written by the consultant and / or by the SABER team in Washington, D.C., depending on the domain. The draft reports are always presented to the Ministries for validation.

Following the validation and country approval of reports, a 2-3 days workshop (Step 5) is usually held with all three countries. The objectives of the workshop are to benchmark the findings and agree on recommendations from the report. The participants are usually senior staff (3-4) from the relevant policy sections within the ministries of education. The reports are reviewed and agreements are made by each Ministry of Education on the issues to adopt.

It should be noted that countries sometimes bring other issues to the table and shared their views, practices and probable solutions with each other as part of benchmarking or learning from each other. A regional report is then developed and submitted to the Technical Working Group for further deliberation and endorsement before it goes to the Steering Committee for final approval (Step 6).

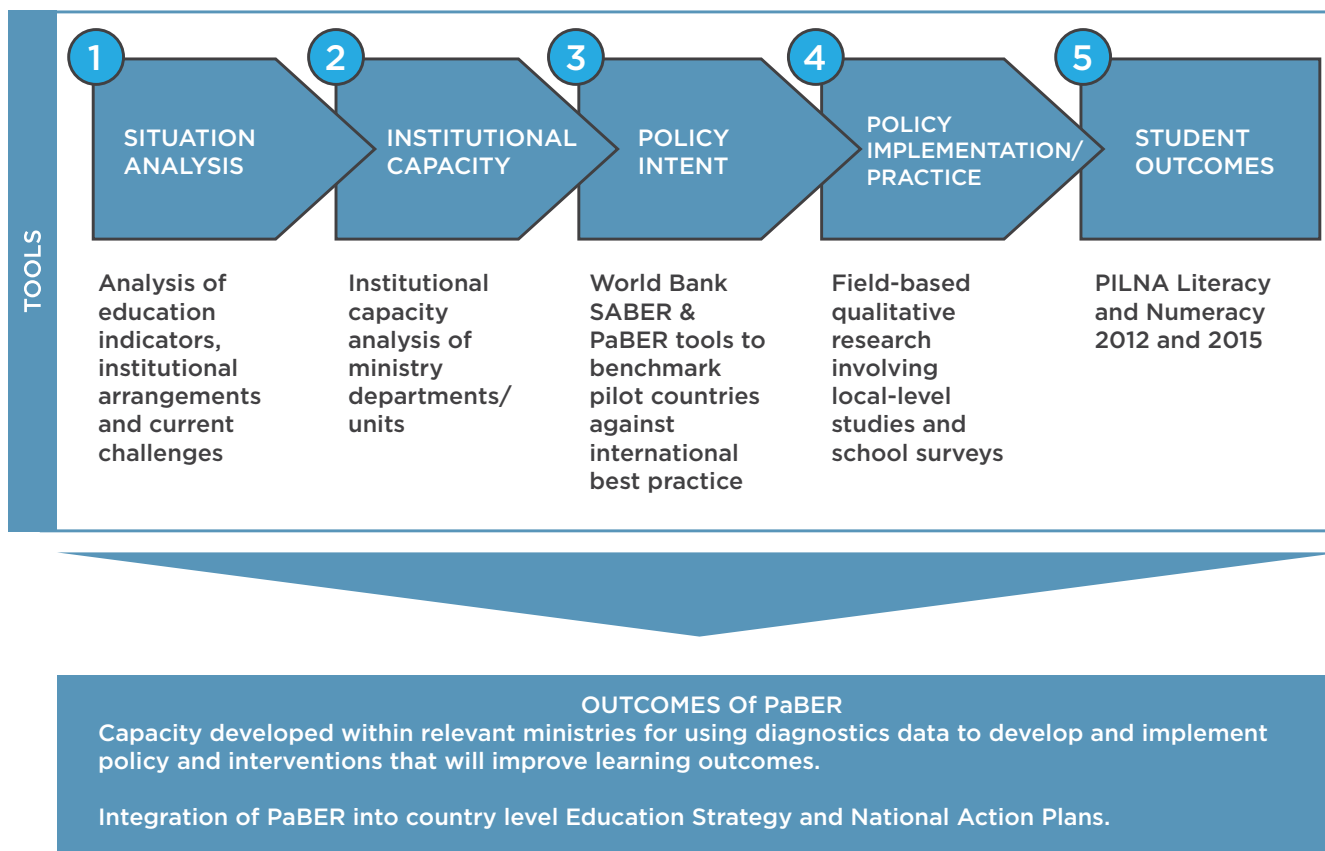


Figure 3: The PaBER approach through using of various tools.

To facilitate the process, PaBER through its approach has developed/adapted and used tools to inform and identify policy and interventions that could improve learning outcomes as shown in Figure 3.

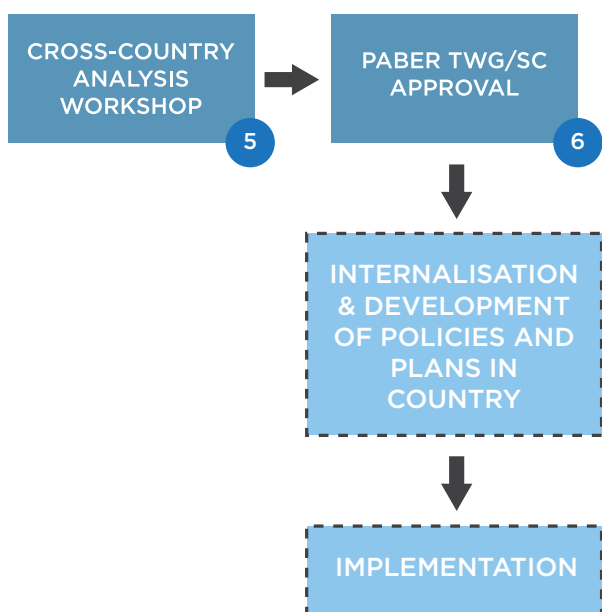


Figure 4: Implementation of Steering Committee recommendations in-country

The Ministries of Education in each country are not expected to begin actively consider and implement all the recommendations from the 5 policy assessments immediately following the workshops. The original intention of PaBER is that the reports would be considered in line with the institutional assessments and the research carried out under component 3. This would form part of the evidence base at the end of the program that would be submitted to all three countries to show what worked and what didn't work. Figure 4 indicate the process at the country level after Steering Committee has approved the recommendations.

To make use of the breadth of evidences collected through PaBER, a triangulation exercise is planned and instituted to consolidate the huge amount of data and evidences collected under each of the domain. Throughout the exercise the countries identified key findings that are important evidences to informing policy interventions to improve quality of education.

ANNEX 2. LIST OF PABER REPORTS (SOURCE DOCUMENTS) USED IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS ANALYSIS

The table below sets out the source documents used to derive the key findings for Solomon Islands for each of the policy domains, as detailed in Section 3 of this report.

REPORTS	DOMAIN				
	TEACHER QUALITY	CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS	STUDENT ASSESSMENT	SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	EMIS
Solomon Islands Teacher Quality SABER Country Report (2014)	X	X	X		
Solomon Islands Student Assessment SABER Country Report (2014)			X	X	
Solomons Islands School Autonomy SABER Country Report (2013)			X	X	
Cross Country Analysis School Governance and Management report (2013)			X	X	
Cross Country Analysis System Assessments report (2014)			X	X	
Solomon Islands Curriculum and Materials Country Report (2014)	X	X	X		
Solomon Islands Institutional Capacity Analysis of National Education System (2013)			X		
Audit of the Assessment Skills of Teachers in Solomon Islands (2016)	X		X		
Solomon Islands Institutional Policy Capacity Analysis Report (2016)	X	X	X	X	X
Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results Solomon Islands Research Report (2016)	X	X	X	X	
Mapping of the Implementation of the Policy Domains in Solomon Islands (2016)	X	X	X	X	
Solomon Islands Education Management Information System SABER Country Report (2015)					X

ANNEX 3. PILNA 2012 RESULTS

The tables below present the PILNA 2012 data in relation to Section 2 in this report.

TABLE X: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN LITERACY AND SUBGROUPS (PILNA 2012)							
ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS	LITERACY	BOYS	GIRLS	GOV'T	NON-GOV'T	URBAN	NON-URBAN
Performing at a satisfactory and expected level	40.6	35.7	45.5	36.1	58.7	65.9	34.7
Working towards expected level	43.9	47.1	40.8	47.2	30.8	29.1	47.4
Critical and not yet working towards expected level	15.4	17.3	13.7	16.7	10.5	4.9	18.0

TABLE Y: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN NUMERACY AND SUBGROUPS (PILNA 2012)							
ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS	NUMERACY	BOYS	GIRLS	GOV'T	NON-GOV'T	URBAN	NON-URBAN
Performing at a satisfactory and expected level	80.7	82.4	78.9	80.5	81.5	89.7	78.5
Working towards expected level	8.8	7.1	10.5	9.0	8.0	5.6	9.6
Critical and not yet working towards expected level	10.5	10.5	10.6	10.5	10.6	4.7	11.9

