



[PIFS/USP]

# The Status of Pacific Education 2020

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP)



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## Abbreviations

DFAT Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DQAF Data Quality Assessment Framework

EFA Education For All

EMIS Education Management Information System

FBEAP Forum Basic Education Action Plan

FEdMM Forum Education Ministers' Meeting

FEMM Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting

FPR Framework for Pacific Regionalism

GPE Global Partnership for Education

ISCED International Standard Classification of Education

PacREF Pacific Regional Education Framework

PEDF Pacific Education Development Framework

PIC Pacific Island Country

PILNA Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment

PSIDS Pacific Small Island Developing States

SIDS Small Island Developing States

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

UIS UNESCO Institute for Statistics

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## Acknowledgments

The GPE version of the 2020 Status of Pacific Education report contains information for six Pacific Island Countries gathered through the hard work and dedicated efforts of many individuals and organisations. This report would not have been possible without the support of the following people and organisations.

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

The Pacific Community, through the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme, is grateful to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for their financial support of the EMIS and education statistics work in the Pacific region.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the ministries and departments of education in the six GPE countries: Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. We are especially grateful to the EMIS focal points in the six GPE countries for their tireless efforts in completing the statistical questionnaires.

We are also grateful for the support of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in providing expertise and technical assistance in the processing, analysis and reporting of internationally comparable education statistics.

Thank you all for your valuable contribution to the 2020 Status of Pacific Education report.

# The Status of Pacific Education

## 1. Introduction

This report is the first of a planned series of “The Status of Pacific Education” reports to be produced biannually by the Pacific Community’s Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) as part of their monitoring of the Pacific Regional Education Framework Programme. In response to the requirements for the Pacific’s application for a grant to support the PacREF Program, this first edition of the report provides a focused look at the six GPE eligible Pacific countries (Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu) that will contribute their GPE funding allocations to financing the PacREF Program.

The Status of Education in the Pacific series is primarily designed to provide the region’s education ministers, their senior executives and policy and planning directors and the region’s development partners, with regular overviews of how education in the region is tracking and of emerging issues and challenges that are common to most, if not all, Pacific states and territories.

This report has four sections: An introduction that includes an overview of the Pacific’s education systems and an important note on data availability issues and how these are being addressed – including the activities to assist countries to report timely quality data,. This is followed by an examination of what available data tells us about the performance of the education systems and their students in the six countries listed above, paying particular to the system’s structure, enrolment and participation, primary level literacy and numeracy outcomes, and teachers. Section 3 provides a comparative perspective of the status of education for all countries across the Pacific region. Data on key education indicators from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics are presented in graphical form, showing the relative differences and similarities between the GPE 6 countries and other Pacific nations, and looks broadly at how Pacific nations performance compares with that of other developing regions. The final section discusses where similarities in system performance, teacher characteristics and student outcomes exist, where individual systems have clear strengths, and where there are shared challenges. It also describes how regional institutions will collectively respond to these challenges and raise the quality of the region’s school systems. Presented as an attachment is an overview of how SDG4 and PacREF monitoring frameworks will utilize common indicators to track education progress across the Pacific over the foreseeable future.

Following this first GPE grant application focused report, comprehensive reports will provide a regional overview of the status of Pacific education across the pre-school, primary and secondary sub-sectors. The first of those reports will be presented at the 2020 Forum Education Ministers’ Meeting.

### 1.1 Regionalism in Pacific Education

Although the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) celebrate rich and diverse backgrounds, they have much in common and share many of the same development challenges<sup>1</sup>. Addressing the challenges that are common to most Pacific countries lies at the heart of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism developed by the Pacific’s political leaders in 2014 – by working efficiently and effectively together, through cooperation and collaboration, Pacific nations will improve not only themselves but the region as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> They all have small but growing populations, limited resources, have fragile environments, are remote and isolated, are susceptible to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, and are vulnerable to external shocks. Most have excessive dependence on international trade and external financing.



Recognizing the importance of the development of human resources in supporting sustainable development, Pacific economic ministers agreed at a Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting (FEMM) in 1999 that high priority should be given to education in national development planning and budgeting, and Pacific Education for All 2015 Review increased emphasis should be given to basic education. Following a recommendation from this meeting, the Pacific Forum Leaders called for a meeting of Forum Education Ministers. In May 2001, a Forum Education Ministers' Meeting (FEEdMM) was convened to consider issues related to human resource development in the Pacific.

Over the two decades the FEEdMM has become an effective mechanism to discuss education policy issues at the regional level. In 2001 FEEdMM adopted the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP), a document setting out the vision, goals and strategies for the future of basic education in the Pacific and reaffirmed its commitment to the Dakar Framework for Action and the six EFA goals. In 2009, at the seventh FEEdMM, a revised regional agenda was endorsed and launched as the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF). Reviews of these programs revealed that, despite their good intentions, the region's main challenges had not been adequately addressed over the course of their implementation. In 2015, the FEEdMM began to move towards shaping a more comprehensive longer-term and calibrated program to raise educational quality across the region, charging the region's own institutions and the regionally-based international education agencies with leading the implementation of the regional endeavor that became the Pacific Education Regional Framework that was endorsed by FEEdMM in 2018 and formally aligned to the SDGs timeline to 2030.

All 15 of the Pacific's three island groupings (Melanesia - Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; Micronesia – Federate States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, RMI, Nauru and Palau; and Polynesia Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu are participating in the regional development focused Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

## 1.2 Education challenges across the Pacific

The reviews of the PEDF and of the FBEAP identified several challenges with regard to education, and although these reviews may now seem dated, education ministers in 2018 and the Pacific's Heads of the Education Systems (PHES) in 2019 confirmed that these seven challenges have not adequately diminished

- Access to and retention in education – too many children are out of school, too few remain to complete a secondary education .
- Equity in access to education – particularly for children on outer islands and in remote areas, children in families with low incomes, and children with disabilities.
- System efficiency – children start school too late, repetition and drop-out rates are too high.
- Quality is too low – levels of student achievement in literacy and numeracy are too low, many teachers are not adequately trained, low relevance of curricula, lack of linkages between education and the labour market.
- System and school management are not effective enough – lack of data, low quality data, shortage of staff skilled in planning and program oversight.
- Inadequate funding – high reliance on external funding, low sector funding from central budgets, inefficient use of available resources
- Poor intra-sector coordination – lack of coordination among education providers in sub-sectors of pre-primary education, TVET and non-formal education.

While there has been overall improvement in access to basic education at the primary and lower-secondary levels and in addressing gender inequalities across the region, there are Pacific countries that have not yet achieved universal primary education and have not achieved full access to pre-primary education, secondary education and/or TVET.

### 1.3 A Note on Data Availability

As shown by data quality assessments, many Pacific countries and territories face many challenges in collecting and producing quality and timely education statistics. These challenges include: little coordination of education data collection across the sector, delays in data collection due to increased data requirements, long periods of time spent on data entry, inadequate statistical processes to ensure data quality, and lack of technical capacity to produce and disseminate statistics. Like many nations, Pacific countries have learnt to value timely high-quality data for planning and decision-making. They also realize that the level of planning they desire will require that they improve the quality availability and timeliness of the education statistics they use for their planning. Most countries also recognize the need for greater public dissemination of their education data as a means of ensuring accountability and value for money. In education and beyond, data quality improvement plans are proving to be essential tools for many Pacific governments.

Over the last five years, the six GPE countries have made varying degrees of progress in their development of Education Management Information System (EMIS), aided by the Pacific Community (SPC) EMIS facility and UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). The countries are also receiving technical support for EMIS development from bilateral (Australia) and/or multilateral (ADB, UNICEF, UNESCO) partners. Except for Tonga, the countries have functional multi-faceted EMIS systems, and Kiribati, Samoa and the Solomon Islands are still exploring systems with some new features (e.g. Open EMIS, FEMIS<sup>2</sup>).

All six GPE countries except RMI have undertaken data quality assessments (Ed-DQAF) which have recommended improvements to EMIS environments, processes and outputs. UIS is collaborating with SPC to support the countries to implement their data quality improvement plans, including improving EMIS technologies, training in statistical processes and technical assistance with statistical outputs, such as education statistics reports.

At national level, the priority PacREF indicators are mostly published in education statistics reports and others can be derived from population census and household survey data. To improve the availability of regional education statistics, EQAP is working to provide internationally comparable statistical data through the Pacific Data Hub based on UIS data provided by all Pacific countries. This data will be used alongside national data to report on progress for SDG4 and PacREF. A regional data collection mechanism using online data dissemination is being considered to enable more detailed and timely data to be shared with development partners. Table 1.1 shows the years for which indicator data is available from education statistics digests for the six GPE countries.

**Table 1.1: PacREF Priority Indicator Data Availability in Education Statistics Digests - GPE 6 Countries**

Country	Out of School Rate	ECE Participation	Literacy & Numeracy	Completion Rate	Trained Teachers
Kiribati	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015	2015-2016
Marshall Is.	2018	2018	2015-2018	2015-2018	2015-2018
Samoa	2015-2018	2015-2018	2015-2017	2015-2017	2017-2018
Solomon Is.	2016-2018	2016-2018	2017	2016-2018	2016-2018
Tonga	2015	2015	2016	2015	2015
Tuvalu	2015-2017	2015-2017	2017	2015-2017	2015-2017

<sup>2</sup> Fiji Education Management Information System.

## 2. Country Perspectives

This section presents data from each of the six GPE eligible countries in the Pacific: Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. The data reveal what we can learn from official data sources, including the countries' national education statistics reports and population census reports. The statistics and the corresponding narrative in part illustrate what progress has been made across the region against key education outcomes.

For each country we first outline the main characteristics of the education system and provide some basic education finance information. We then provide an overview of key measures of participation and enrolment. This is followed by a review of recent primary level literacy and numeracy outcomes and of the country's most recent results in Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA).

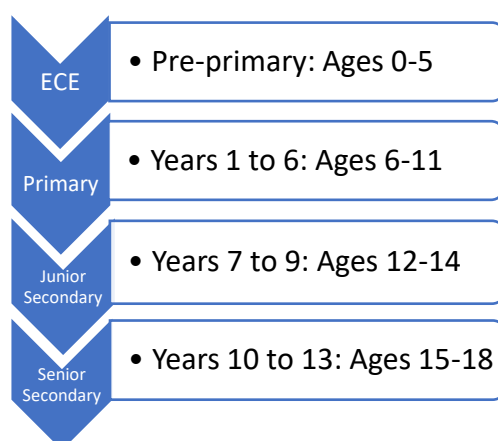
The reader should be aware that, there are gaps in the data that are publicly available that prevent us from communicating a more comprehensive narrative for many countries. Although data quality and data availability are improving across the region, and efforts are underway through PacREF and other means ensure that timely and consistent data is readily available and accessible for use in-country and to regional and international agencies, we anticipate that it will be three to four years before we can view Pacific systems' performance in real-time. Nevertheless, the currently available data do reveal a reasonably clear picture of the successes of Pacific education systems. To support in-country data use, SPC is working closely with UIS to assist ministries of education with the analysis of data from their national EMIS, the calculation of education indicators and the production of education statistics reports.

## 2.1 Kiribati

### i. The Education System

Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Kiribati is provided by the non-government sector including churches and other community based groups. Free, compulsory schooling in Kiribati consists of six years of Primary (Years 1 to 6) and three years of Secondary school education (Years 7-9, Junior Secondary). These first 9 years of schooling are both compulsory and free for all children in Kiribati, and the system is administered by the Ministry of Education. At the end of Year 9, competitive examinations are held which determine student's ability to progress into the Senior Secondary School system. Figure 1 shows the levels of education with official age groups in Kiribati.

**Figure 2.1 Kiribati School System Structure**



Secondary education is provided by both the government and a number of privately operated church schools. Junior Secondary Schools comprise three years of schooling (Years 7 to 9), Senior Secondary education consists of four years of schooling (Years 10 to 13). Church schools provide secondary schooling through both combined Junior and Senior Secondary Schools. Schooling is fee-free up to Year 9, and Years 10 to 12 for students who pass national examinations (Education Amendment Act 2016). Students must successfully complete examinations in years 12 and 13 in order to progress onto technical and further education.

**Table 2.1 Kiribati school enrolments, 2015-2016**

Year	ECE enrolment			Primary enrolment			Secondary enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,521	7,642	15,163	5,225	6,438	11,663
2016	n/a	n/a	n/a	8,476	8,404	16,880	5,365	6,320	11,685

Source: *Digest of Education Statistics 2016, Ministry of Education, Republic of Kiribati*

In 2019, education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) was 15%, and projected to increase to 33% in 2023. Recurrent expenditure on primary education as a percentage of the education budget was 39% in 2019, and expected to decline to 22% over next three years.

## ii. Participation and Completion

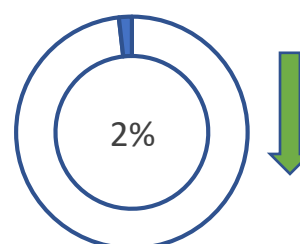
The number of primary school-age children not enrolled in education is low, with around two to three percent not enrolled at any level of schooling. However, it is likely that some of these children are enrolled in Early Childhood Education as they may be assessed as not yet school ready. There is no information on the gender distribution of out-of-school children.

**Table 2.1.1: Out-of-school rate for primary education, Kiribati**

Year	Primary Out of School Rate
	Total
2015	2.6%
2016	1.8%

Source: Kiribati Digest of Education Statistics 2016

**Figure 2.1.1: Primary Out-of-school rate, Kiribati**



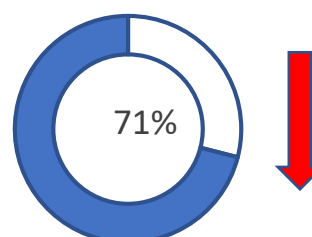
The percentage of new entrant students (into Year 1) who had attended ECE remains variable. In 2016, seven out of ten new entrant students had attended ECE, down from 85% in 2015. However, it is unknown whether the variability reflects an actual decline in participation rates, data recording issues or some other factor.

**Table 2.1.2: Participation rate in early childhood education, Kiribati**

Year	Percentage of Year 1 new entrants who have attended ECE			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	83.6%	83.4%	85.5%	1.00
2016	69.6%	72.1%	70.9%	1.04

Source: Kiribati Digest of Education Statistics 2016

**Figure 2.1.2: ECE Participation rate, Kiribati**



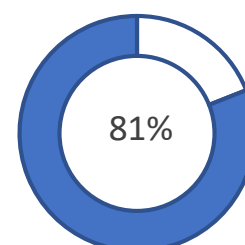
Based on the results of 2015 Population Census, almost all of the population has completed at least primary education, eight out of ten have completed at least lower secondary education, and two out of ten have completed upper secondary education. At all education levels and in increasing proportions at higher levels, more girls than boys completed schooling.

**Table 2.1.5: Completion rate for primary and secondary education, Kiribati**

Level	Completion Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
Primary	95.2%	98.0%	96.6%	1.03
Lower Secondary	75.8%	86.9%	81.4%	1.15
Upper Secondary	14.3%	21.0%	17.6%	1.46

Source: Kiribati Population Census 2016

**Figure 2.1.5: Lower secondary completion rate, Kiribati**



### iii. Literacy and Numeracy

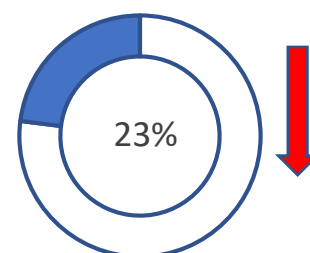
In 2016, there was a decline in the results for Year 6 students with less than a quarter of students performing at or above the expected standard compared to four out of ten students in 2015. This result shows a return to the levels achieved in 2013. The 2015 result did not include a listening component within the assessment, and this may have elevated the 2015 results. Year 6 numeracy results remain fairly stable for both boys and girls in 2016 with around six out of ten girls performing at expected levels compared to only half of the boys. A higher proportion of Year 6 boys are at risk in 2016, compared to 2015. Girls continue to perform better than boys in the assessments.

**Table 2.1.3: Primary students achieving proficiency in literacy, Kiribati**

Year	Percentage of Year 6 primary students achieving minimum proficiency in literacy			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	28%	45%	37%	1.61
2016	15%	30%	23%	2.00

Source: Kiribati Digest of Education Statistics 2016

**Figure 2.1.3: Primary literacy proficiency, Kiribati**

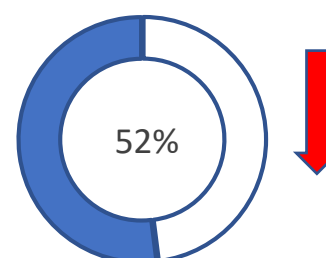


**Table 2.1.4: Primary students achieving proficiency in numeracy, Kiribati**

Year	Percentage of Year 6 primary students achieving minimum proficiency in numeracy			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	49%	59%	54%	1.20
2016	46%	59%	52%	1.28

Source: Kiribati Digest of Education Statistics 2016

**Figure 2.1.4: Primary numeracy proficiency, Kiribati**



The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA 2018) showed that 63% of Year 6 girls met or exceeded the minimum literacy proficiency expectation compared to 41% of Year 6 boys. For numeracy, the proportion of Year 6 girls performing at or above the expected minimum proficiency levels was 88% compared to around 78% of boys.

### iv. Teachers

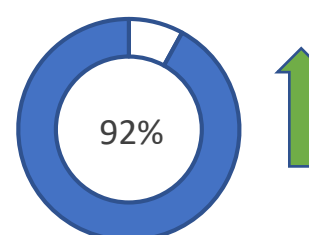
In 2016, nine out of ten primary teachers and two-thirds of secondary teachers were certified teachers. At primary level, certified teachers have completed Year 11 of secondary school and have a teaching certificate or diploma. However, teacher certification and qualification data should be treated with caution due to under and inaccurate reporting of qualifications and certification.

**Table 2.1.6 Trained teachers in primary and secondary education, Kiribati**

Year	% primary teachers	% secondary teachers
	Total	Total
2015	78.8%	58.5%
2016	91.9%	63.6%

Source: Kiribati Digest of Education Statistics 2016

**Figure 2.1.6: Trained primary teachers, Kiribati**

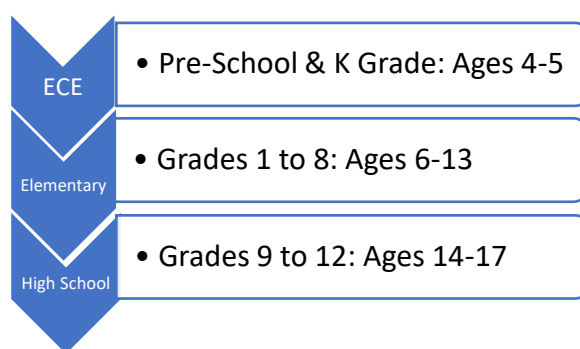


## 2.2 Marshall Islands

### i. The Education System

The Marshall Islands K - 12 school system is made up of public and private schools. There are 80 public elementary schools, 15 private elementary schools, 6 public high schools and 11 private high schools. The Public Schools System administers the public schools only, but the government provides funding for private schools and oversees their operations for compliance with government requirements. Education in the Marshall Islands is compulsory for children aged 5 – 18 years. Government public schools are free, while private schools charge a tuition fee. The education system is based on the American model of education, consisting of these basic components:

**Figure 2.2 Marshall Islands School System Structure**



**Table 2.2 Marshall Islands school enrolments, 2015-2018**

Year	ECE enrolment			Primary enrolment			Secondary enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11,037	n/a	n/a	3,125
2016	n/a	n/a	1,217	n/a	n/a	12,166	n/a	n/a	3,276
2017	n/a	n/a	1,245	n/a	n/a	11,584	n/a	n/a	2,638
2018	n/a	n/a	1,267	n/a	n/a	11,452	n/a	n/a	3,013

Source: *Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018, Ministry of Education, Republic of Marshall Islands*

In 2019, education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) was 19%, and is expected to decline slightly to 18% in 2023. Recurrent expenditure on primary education as a percentage of the education budget was 30% in 2019, and is not expected to change over next three years.

### iii. Participation and Completion

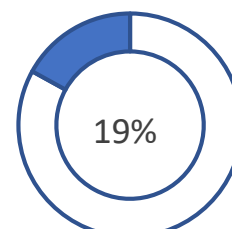
In 2018, one in five primary-aged children were out of school, with more boys than girls not enrolled. The low level of enrolment is supported by enrolment rate statistics that show that primary net enrolment is around 80% which has changed little from 2015 to 2018. Interestingly, student daily attendance in schools is higher in the outer islands than in the main urban area.

**Table 2.2.1: Out-of-school rate for primary education, Marshall Islands**

Year	Out-of-School Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2018	22.0%	15.2%	18.8%	0.69

Source: Marshall Islands Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018

**Figure 2.2.1: Primary out of school rate, Marshall Islands**



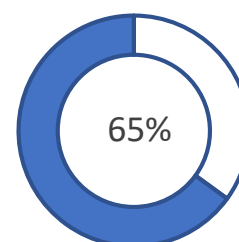
Two thirds of children were enrolled in some form of early childhood education in the year prior to primary school. The low rate of participation in early childhood education reflect the fact that elementary education starts at kindergarten and few private schools are offering early childhood education. Gross enrolment rates in early childhood education suggest there has been only a small improvement in participation between the years 2015 and 2018.

**Table 2.2.2: Participation rate in early childhood education, Marshall Islands**

Year	ECE Participation Rate
	Total
2018	64.9%

Source: Marshall Islands Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018

**Figure 2.2.2: ECE Participation Rate, Marshall Islands**



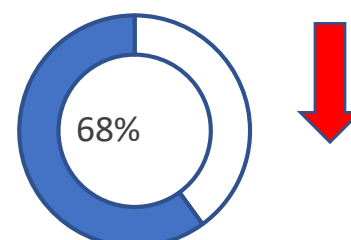
The completion rate is defined by the Marshall Islands as the percentage of students who completed 8th and 12th grades out of the cohort who entered 8 and 4 years earlier respectively. Over the four years period 2015 to 2018 there has been a continual decline in the proportion of students who enrol in the last year of primary education. At secondary level, there has been a moderate increase in enrolment in the last year of secondary education.

**Table 2.2.5: Completion rate for primary education, Marshall Islands**

Year	Total
2015	77%
2016	73%
2017	75%
2018	68%

Source: Marshall Islands Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018

**Figure 2.2.5: Primary completion rate, Marshall Islands**





## ii. Literacy and Numeracy

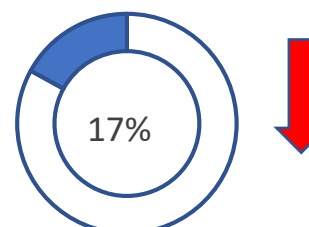
The Marshall Islands Standards Assessment Test (MISAT) in English reading and mathematics measures the level of proficiency for grade 6 students. Proficiency in English reading dropped slightly from 2015 but increased in Math in 2018.

**Table 2.2.3: Primary students achieving proficiency in literacy, Marshall Islands**

Year	Total
2015	19%
2016	19%
2017	16%
2018	17%

Source: Marshall Islands Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018

**Figure 2.2.3: Primary literacy proficiency, Marshall Islands**

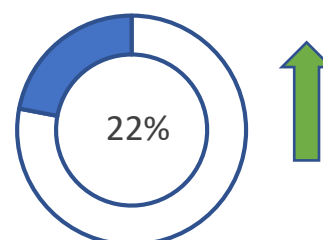


**Table 2.2.4: Primary students achieving proficiency in numeracy, Marshall Islands**

Year	Total
2015	21%
2016	20%
2017	18%
2018	22%

Source: Marshall Islands Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018

**Figure 2.2.4: Primary numeracy proficiency, Marshall Islands**



The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA 2018) shows that considerably more girls than boys performed above the minimum threshold (level 5) for Grade 7. In total, 70% of Grade 7 girls met or exceeded the minimum literacy proficiency expectations compared to 58% of Grade 7 boys. For numeracy, the proportion of Grade 7 girls performing at or above the expected minimum proficiency level was around 79%, compared to approximately 76% of boys.

## iii. Teachers

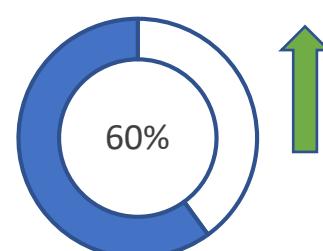
Between 2015 and 2018, there has been a small improvement in the number of fully certified teachers, with six out of ten teachers certified in 2018. No information is presented on the certification of primary and secondary teachers separately.

**Table 2.2.6: Trained teachers in primary and secondary education, Marshall Islands**

Year	Total
2015	57.5%
2016	61.7%
2017	61.5%
2018	60.0%

Source: Marshall Islands Digest of Education Statistics 2017-2018

**Figure 2.2.6: Primary and secondary trained teachers, Marshall Islands**

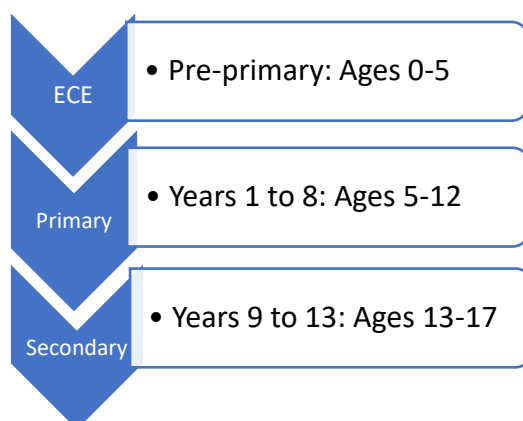


## 2.3 Samoa

### i. The Education System

Children in Samoa may attend school from early childhood education until they reach tertiary level. While ECE is not compulsory, the Education Amendment Bill 2018 mandates that all children can attend ECE when they are four years old, as it is the initial fundamental first step of every child's education life.

**Figure 2.3 Samoa School System Structure**



Early Childhood Education in Samoa is governed by the National Council of Early Childhood Education with the assistance of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. The centres are managed by boards of various churches/religious groups and organisations. The official age for ECE is 3-4 years of age.

Primary Education covers Year levels 1 to 8 as governed by the Education Act 2009. At primary level, three national assessments are conducted. The Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level (SPELL) assessments are administered for years 4 and 6 and at the end of Year 8, students sit the Samoa Primary Education Certificate of Attainment (SPECA) assessment.

Secondary Education in Samoa is from year levels 9 to 13. At the end of year 12, students sit the Samoa School Certificate (SSC) national examination to determine their progression to year 13. The Samoa Secondary Leaving Certificate (SSLC) is sat by all year 13 students and determines enrolment into tertiary education.

**Table 2.3 Samoa school enrolments, 2015-2018**

Year	ECE enrolment			Primary enrolment			Secondary enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015	1,797	1,733	3,530	19,830	18,635	38,465	7,002	7,662	14,664
2016	1,737	1,752	3,489	20,194	19,087	39,281	7,055	7,528	14,583
2017	2,072	2,162	4,234	20,713	19,436	40,149	6,874	7,516	14,390
2018	2,145	2,317	4,462	20,702	19,428	40,130	6,805	7,300	14,105

Source: Education Statistical Digest 2018, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Samoa

In 2019, education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) was 15%, and is projected to decrease to 13% by 2023. Recurrent expenditure on primary education as a percentage of the education budget was only 4% in 2019.

## ii. Participation and Completion

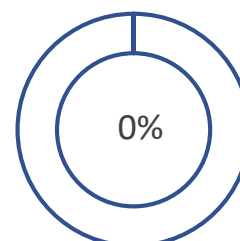
All primary school-age children aged 5-12 are enrolled in education. The net enrolment rate has been consistently at 100% for both boys and girls in primary education.

**Table 2.3.1: Out-of-school rate for primary education, Samoa**

Year	Primary Out of School Rate		
	Male	Female	Total
2015	0%	0%	0%
2016	0%	0%	0%
2017	0%	0%	0%
2018	0%	0%	0%

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.1: Primary out-of-school rate education, Samoa**



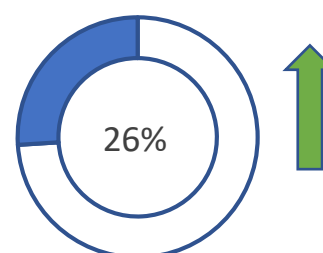
There is a slight decline in net enrolment rate in 2018 compared to the previous three years. Females always have high enrolment rates compared to males over the five year period. Since it is not compulsory, majority of the children stay home until they reach five or six years old before they enter first year of primary education.

**Table 2.3.2: Participation rate in early childhood education, Samoa**

Year	Net Enrolment Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	21%	22%	22%	1.05
2016	21%	23%	22%	1.10
2017	26%	29%	28%	1.12
2018	24%	28%	26%	1.17

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.2: ECE participation rate, Samoa**



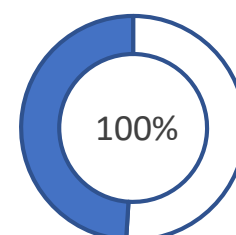
Based on the Gross Intake Ratio to Last Grade indicator, there is a high level of completion of primary education with all students completing Year 8. Only half of all students complete the last year of secondary education (Year 13). The completion rate in secondary education has decreased by two percentage points over the last two years.

**Table 2.3.5: Completion rate for primary education, Samoa**

Year	Gross Intake Ratio to Last Grade			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	111%	106%	108%	0.95
2016	107%	112%	109%	1.05
2017	104%	106%	105%	1.03

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.5: Primary completion rate, Samoa**

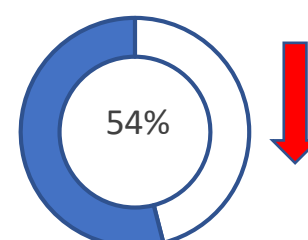


**Table 2.3.6: Completion rate for secondary education, Samoa**

Year	Gross Intake Ratio to Last Grade			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	44%	70%	56%	1.59
2016	47%	73%	59%	1.54
2017	43%	66%	54%	1.53

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.6: Secondary completion rate, Samoa**



## ii. Literacy and Numeracy

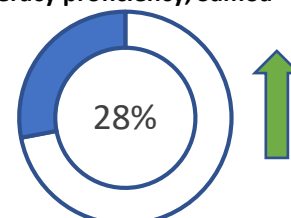
In the Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level (SPELL) assessments, student proficiency in literacy and numeracy specifically refers to the percentage of students working at the expected competency levels for English and Mathematics. On average, year 6 females perform better in all subjects in contrast to their male counterparts. Both literacy and numeracy show that more than half of boys have not reached proficiency levels with less than four out of every ten boys in numeracy and less than two out of every ten boys in English. However, nearly six out of every ten girls are achieving at expected levels.

**Table 2.3.3: Primary students achieving proficiency in literacy, Samoa**

Year	Percentage of Year 6 primary students achieving minimum proficiency in literacy			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total*	
2015	12%	24%	18%	2.00
2016	36%	54%	45%	1.50
2017	19%	36%	28%	1.90

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.3: Primary literacy proficiency, Samoa**

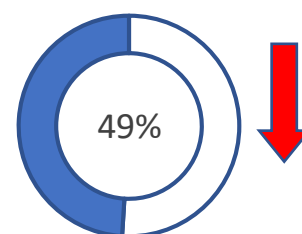


**Table 2.3.4: Primary students achieving proficiency in numeracy, Samoa**

Year	Percentage of Year 6 primary students achieving minimum proficiency in numeracy			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total*	
2015	45%	56%	51%	1.24
2016	50%	58%	54%	1.16
2017	39%	59%	49%	1.51

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.4: Primary numeracy proficiency, Samoa**



The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA 2018) showed that 74% of Year 6 girls met or exceeded the minimum literacy proficiency expectations compared to 50% of Year 6 boys. The proportion of girls performing at or above the expected minimum proficiency level in numeracy was around 85%, compared to 67% of boys.

## iii. Teachers

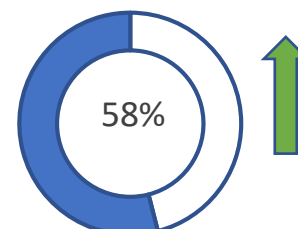
Since the introduction of new reforms and mandates from the Government, all teachers are required to obtain a degree as a minimum qualification. Teachers with certificates and diplomas are all required to enrol in teacher upgrade programmes. In 2018, around six out of ten primary and secondary teachers have a diploma or degree level qualification.

**Table 2.3.7: Qualified teachers in primary education, Samoa**

Year	% qualified teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
2017	48%	54%	53%
2018	66%	55%	58%

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.7: Qualified primary teachers, Samoa**

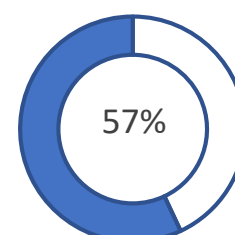


**Table 2.3.8: Qualified teachers in secondary education, Samoa**

Year	% qualified teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
2017	51%	61%	57%
2018	53%	60%	57%

Source: Samoa Education Statistical Digest 2018

**Figure 2.3.8: Qualified secondary teachers, Samoa**

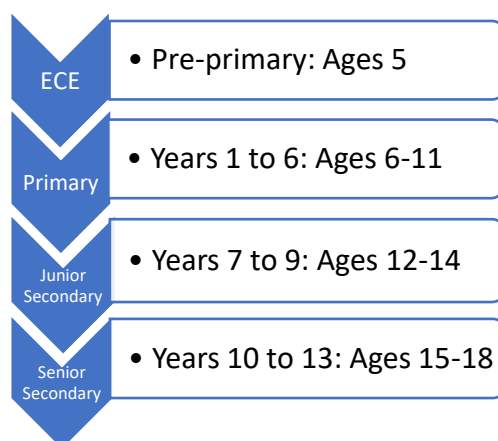


## 2.4 Solomon Islands

### i. The Education System

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is responsible for the administration and management of the early childhood and schooling system. Early Childhood Education (ECE) caters for three, four and five year old children. ECE (age 3 and 4) is community based and the pre-primary year (age 5) is the foundation year to basic education. Primary education covers Years 1 to 6, junior secondary education from Year 7 to Year 9, and senior secondary from Year 10 to Year 13.

**Figure 2.4 Solomon Islands School System Structure**



**Table 2.4 Solomon Islands school enrolments, 2015-2018**

Year	ECE enrolment			Primary enrolment			Secondary enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015	25,818	24,243	50,061	53,724	49,914	103,638	25,601	23,546	49,147
2016	27,019	25,550	52,569	55,466	51,352	106,818	26,889	24,977	51,866
2017	28,747	27,467	56,214	56,797	52,828	109,625	26,712	25,926	52,638
2018	28,657	27,527	56,184	56,009	52,168	108,177	27,031	26,055	53,086

Source: Performance Assessment Report 2018, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Government of the Solomon Islands

In 2019, education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) was 33% and is projected to increase to 34% by 2023. Recurrent expenditure on primary education as a percentage of the education budget was 26% and is not expect to change over the next three years.

### i. Participation and Completion

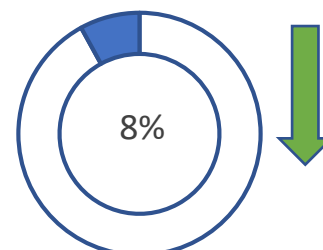
For the period 2016 to 2018, there was a slight decline in the percentage of children of official school age for primary education who were not enrolled at school. There were substantially more girls than boys not enrolled in primary education. The out of school rate varies by school location, with higher rates in rural areas and lower rates in urban areas.

**Table 2.4.1: Out-of-school rate for primary education, Solomon Islands**

Year	Primary Out of School Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2016	3.8%	16.8%	10.1%	4.42
2017	0.6%	13.1%	6.6%	21.83
2018	2.1%	14.2%	8.0%	6.76

Source: Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2018

**Figure 2.4.1: Primary out-of-school rate, Solomon Islands**



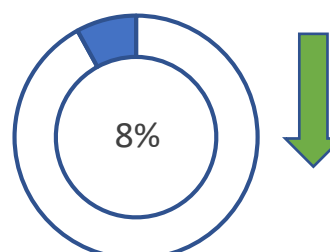
Based on the age specific enrolment rate of five year olds, the participation of children in early childhood education can be calculated. In 2017 and 2018, around three-quarters of children were enrolled in ECE, an increase since 2016. Slightly more girls than boys were enrolled in ECE, with the gender gap widening over the period from 2016 to 2018. The participation rate varies by school location with higher rates in urban populated areas and lower rates in less populated areas.

**Table 2.4.2: Participation rate in early childhood education, Solomon Islands**

Year	Percentage of children aged 5 years who are enrolled ECCE			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2016	67.8%	69.2%	68.5%	1.02
2017	73.3%	77.1%	75.1%	1.05
2018	72.6%	78.0%	75.1%	1.07

Source: Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2018

**Figure 2.4.2: ECE participation rate, Solomon Islands**



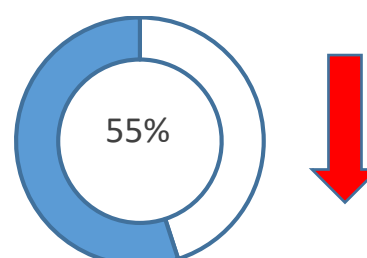
The primary survival rate is the percentage of a cohort of students enrolled in the first grade of a primary education who are expected to reach a given grade, regardless of repetition. This indicator illustrates the situation regarding retention of students from grade to grade in primary schools. The primary survival rate has declined over the period 2016 to 2018, with only slightly more than half of students who started school completing year 6. Slightly more girls than boys complete Year 6 at primary level.

**Table 2.4.4: Completion rate for primary education, Solomon Islands**

Year	Primary Survival Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2016	62.9%	66.7%	64.8%	1.06
2017	55.0%	57.5%	56.2%	1.05
2018	53.9%	56.6%	55.2%	1.05

Source: Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2018

**Figure 2.4.4: Primary completion rate, Solomon Islands**



## ii. Literacy and Numeracy

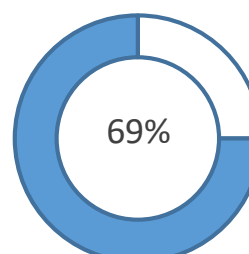
The Solomon Islands Standardized Test for Achievement (SISTA) is administered every second year with analysis and findings published the following year. A minimum standard (or proficient standard) benchmarks the performance of students performing at or above the level that typically demonstrates the basic elements of literacy and numeracy expected for the year level. In 2017, more than two-thirds of Year 6 students were at or above the expected level for both English literacy and numeracy.

**Table 2.4.3: Primary students achieving proficiency in literacy and numeracy, Solomon Islands**

Year	Literacy	Numeracy
2017	68.9%	70.8%

Source: Performance Assessment Report 2018

**Figure 2.4.3: Primary literacy proficiency, Solomon Islands**



Evidence from the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA 2018) showed that 73% of Year 6 girls met or exceeded the minimum literacy proficiency expectations compared to 66% of Year 6 boys. Approximately 96% of both Year 6 boys and girls performed at or above the expected minimum proficiency level in numeracy.

## iii. Teachers

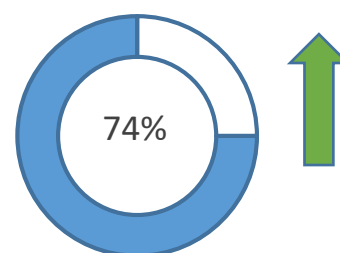
Certified teachers are those who have both a qualification in their teaching subjects and a qualification in teaching or have a generalist teaching qualification. In 2018, three-quarters of primary teachers and nine out of ten secondary teachers were certified. There was a six percentage point increase in certified teachers occurred in both primary secondary education from 2016 to 2018. At primary level, there were more male teachers certified than female teachers, whereas at secondary level there were more female teachers certified.

**Table 2.4.5: Trained teachers in primary education, Solomon Islands**

Year	% trained teachers			Gender
	Male	Female	Total	
2016	68%	63%	66%	0.93
2017	75%	70%	72%	0.94
2018	77%	71%	74%	0.92

Source: Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2018

**Figure 2.4.5: Primary trained teachers, Solomon Islands**

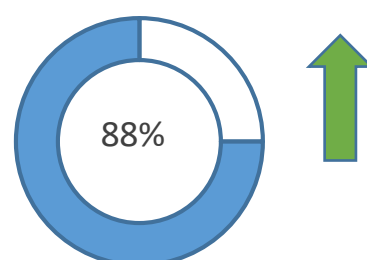


**Table 2.4.6: Trained teachers in secondary education, Solomon Islands**

Year	% trained teachers			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2016	80%	86%	82%	1.07
2017	84%	87%	85%	1.04
2018	88%	89%	88%	1.01

Source: Solomon Islands Performance Assessment Report 2018

**Figure 2.4.6: Secondary trained teachers, Solomon Islands**



## 2.5 Tonga

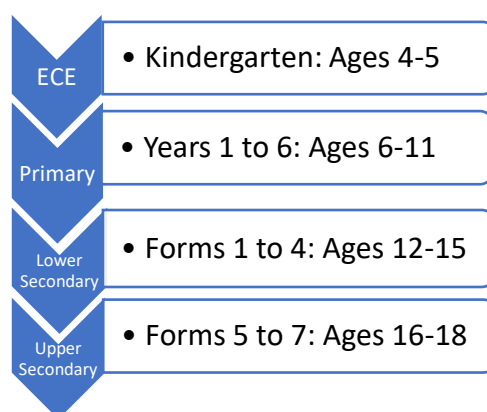
### i. The Education System

Early childhood education comprises day care learning centres and kindergartens. Children enrolled in kindergarten are aged 4 and 5 years old.

Basic education includes primary education and the first two years of secondary education. Primary education comprises Years 1 to 6 and includes children 6 to 11 years old and lower secondary children 12 to 13 years of age.

Secondary education is divided into lower secondary for Forms 1 to 4 and upper secondary for Forms 5 to 7. Student ages range from 12 to 15 year olds for lower secondary education and from 16 to 18 years for upper secondary education.

**Figure 2.5 Tonga School System Structure**



**Table 2.5 Tonga school enrolments, 2015**

Year	ECE enrolment			Primary enrolment			Secondary enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015	1,153	1,101	2,254	8,930	8,052	16,982	8,072	7,728	15,800

Source: Ministry of Education and Training, Government of Tonga

In 2019, education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) was 17%, and is projected to increase slightly to 18% by 2023. Recurrent expenditure on primary education as a percentage of the education budget was 46% and projected to decline to 36% by 2023.



### iii. Participation and Completion

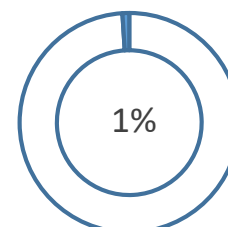
The number of primary school-age children not enrolled in education is low, with around 1% not enrolled at any level of schooling. However, it is likely that some of these children are enrolled in early childhood education as they may be assessed as not yet school ready. There is no information on the gender distribution of out-of-school children.

**Table 2.5.1: Out-of-school rate for primary education, Tonga**

Year	Total
2015	1.1%

Source: Tonga Ministry of Education and Training

**Figure 2.5.1: Primary out of school rate, Tonga**



The percentage of new entrant students (into Year 1) who had attended ECE is unknown due to the lack of reporting of data for the ECE sector.

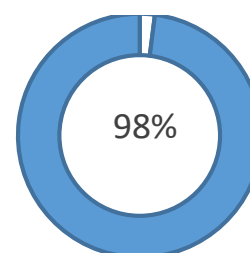
Based on the results of 2016 Population Census, almost all of the population has completed at least primary education, and almost all individuals have completed at least lower secondary education. However, less than half have completed upper secondary education. No information is available on the differences in completion rates for boys and girls.

**Table 2.5.3: Completion rate for primary and secondary education, Tonga**

Level	Total
Primary	97.7%
Lower Secondary	96.6%
Upper Secondary	46.2%

Source: Tonga Department of Statistics

**Figure 2.5.3: Primary completion rate, Tonga**



### ii. Literacy and Numeracy

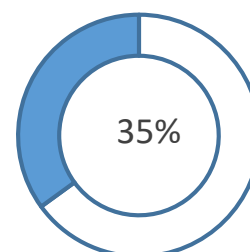
Tonga regularly administers testing of literacy and numeracy for Year 6 students. In 2015, a third of students were at or above the expected level for English literacy (reading) and eight out of ten of students were at or above the expected level for numeracy (maths). No information is published on the gender gap for assessment data.

**Table 2.5.2: Primary students achieving proficiency in literacy and numeracy, Tonga**

Year	Literacy	Numeracy
2015	35%	83%

Source: Tonga Ministry of Education and Training

**Figure 2.5.2: Primary literacy proficiency, Tonga**



The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA 2018) shows that more girls than boys performed above the minimum threshold (level 5). In total, 59% of Year 6 girls met or exceeded the minimum literacy proficiency expectations compared to 36% of Year 6 boys. For numeracy, the proportion of girls performing at or above the expected minimum proficiency levels was approximately 95%, compared to about 89% of boys.

### iii. Teachers

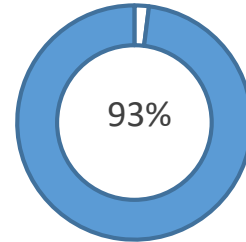
In 2015, nine out of ten primary teachers and six out of ten secondary teachers were trained teachers for the level of education they were teaching. Slightly more male teachers than female teachers were trained in teaching pedagogy at primary and secondary education level.

**Table 2.5.4: Trained teachers in primary education, Tonga**

Year	% trained teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
2015	94.3	91.6	92.5%

Source: Tonga Ministry of Education and Training

**Figure 2.5.4: Primary trained teachers, Tonga**

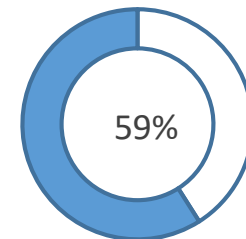


**Table 2.5.5: Trained teachers in secondary education, Tonga**

Year	% trained teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
2015	59.0	58.4	58.7%

Source: Tonga Ministry of Education and Training

**Figure 2.5.5: Secondary trained teachers, Tonga**

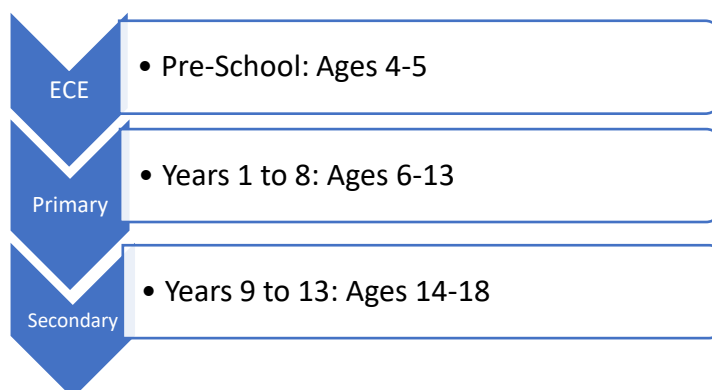


## 2.6 Tuvalu

### i. The Education System

The government in Tuvalu provides free primary education for all. By law, it is compulsory for everyone between the ages of six and 15 to attend school. The government funds all tuitions, books and stationery along with infrastructure development and provision of teachers, with support from development partners. Government funding and donor support, combined with Tuvalu's small geographic size, have resulted in accessible primary education for all.

**Figure 2.6 Tuvalu School System Structure**



Primary education consists of eight years of schooling (Years 1 to 8), though Year 9 students were enrolled in primary due to prevention on violence (86 students in total). There are 9 government primary schools, one on each island, and a private primary school in Funafuti.

Secondary education consists of five years of schooling, Forms 3 through 7 (also referred to as Year 9 to 13). The government-run secondary school is a boarding school. A Non-Government secondary school receives a government grant and operates an alternative curriculum and examinations.

Education is compulsory until the end of the year the child turns 15, generally two years after primary school. In the past, children failing the national examination in Form 2 (Year 8) were required to repeat Form 2 and re-sit the examination until they passed or reached the age of 15.

**Table 2.6 Tuvalu school enrolments, 2015-2017**

Year	ECE enrolment			Primary enrolment			Secondary enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015	356	342	698	895	834	1,729	318	387	705
2016	360	336	696	904	829	1,733	301	352	653
2017	307	320	627	954	826	1,780	280	362	642

Source: Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Government of Tuvalu

In 2019, education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) was 11%, and recurrent expenditure on primary education as a percentage of the education budget was 48%.

#### iv. Participation and Completion

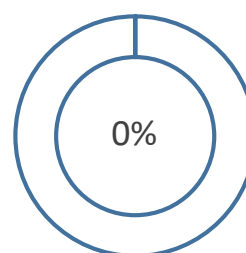
Based on recent population estimates, there are more children of primary school age enrolled in education than in the population. This may however be the result of recent migration to Tuvalu that has not been captured in the last population census. There are a number of children who migrate to Fiji for their education. Net enrolment rates, based on typical ages for enrolment, also suggest there is full enrolment of primary school- aged children in schools.

**Table 2.6.1: Out-of-school rate for primary education, Tuvalu**

Year	Out-of School Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	0%	0%	0%	1.00
2016	0%	0%	0%	1.00
2017	0%	0%	0%	1.00

Source: Tuvalu Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017

**Figure 2.6.1: Primary out of school rate, Tuvalu**



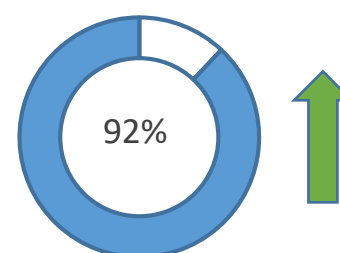
Participation in high-quality ECE has significant benefits for children and their future learning ability. Tuvalu, along with other Pacific countries, is putting a great deal of effort into increasing access to early childhood education. However, the total percentage of Year 1 students who have ECE experience had slightly increased in 2016 compared with 2015. There is no significant difference between the male and female participation rates in ECCE.

**Table 2.6.2: Participation rate in early childhood education, Tuvalu**

Year	ECE Participation Rate			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	85%	85%	85%	1.00
2016	84%	89%	87%	1.06
2017	91%	93%	92%	1.02

Source: Tuvalu Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017

**Figure 2.6.2: ECE participation rate, Tuvalu**



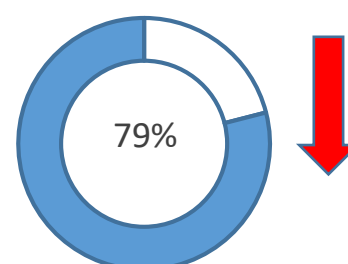
Over recent years, there has been a significant decrease in primary school completion rates. In 2017, less than eight out of ten children were enrolled in the last grade of primary school (Year 8). However, this decline may be due to the fact that most 13 year olds were enrolled in secondary education. In terms of gender variation, substantially more girls than boys completed primary education.

**Table 2.6.5: Completion rate for primary education, Tuvalu**

Year	Gross Intake Ratio to Last Primary Grade			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2015	93.7	96.5	95.1	1.03
2016	83.9	100	92.8	1.19
2017	75.5	83.3	79.0	1.10

Source: Tuvalu Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017

**Figure 2.6.5: Primary completion rate, Tuvalu**



## v. Literacy and Numeracy

One of the measures used to analyse the delivery of quality education in Tuvalu is the pass rate in the National Year 8 Examination (NYEE). The national target is for all schools to achieve a pass rate of 70 percent or more on the exam. At the end of primary education in 2017, three-quarters of Year 8 students pass the English literacy examination and two-thirds pass the Maths examination. Girls outperform boys in both subjects: the gender gap is almost 30 percentage points for English and 15 percentage points for Maths.

**Table 2.6.3: Primary students achieving proficiency in literacy, Tuvalu**

Year	Percentage of Year 8 primary students achieving passes in national examination			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2017	60.9	89.4	75.3	1.47

Source: Tuvalu Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017

**Table 2.6.4: Primary students achieving proficiency in numeracy, Tuvalu**

Year	Percentage of Year 8 primary students achieving passes in national examination			Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
2017	56.5	72.3	64.5	1.28

Source: Tuvalu Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017

The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA 2018) showed that considerably more girls than boys performed at each of the levels above the minimum threshold in literacy. In total, 69% of Year 6 girls in Tuvalu met or exceeded the minimum threshold (level 5) while only 28% of Year 6 boys did so. For numeracy the proportion of Year 6 girls performing at or above the expected minimum proficiency levels was 92%, compared to about 76% of boys.

## vi. Teachers

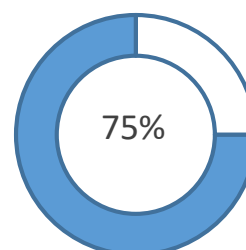
A certified teacher in Tuvalu is defined as a teacher who has undertaken specialised post-secondary teacher training and has met the course requirements, with or without other post-secondary qualifications. Over the period 2015 to 2017 there has been a substantial decline in the percentage of certified primary and secondary teachers. While all primary and secondary teachers were certified in 2015, less than nine out of ten primary teachers and only six out of ten secondary teachers were certified in 2017.

**Table 2.6.6: Trained teachers in primary and secondary education**

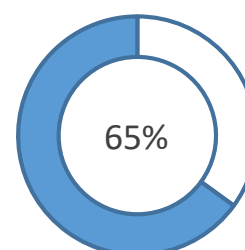
Year	% primary teachers	% secondary teachers
	Total	Total
2015	100%	100%
2016	97%	72%
2017	86%	63%

Source: Tuvalu Education Statistical Report 2016 & 2017

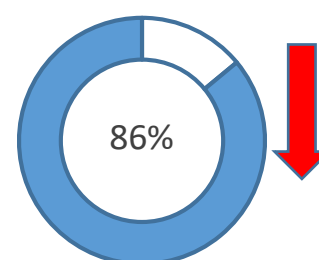
**Figure 2.6.3: Primary literacy proficiency, Tuvalu**



**Figure 2.6.4: Primary numeracy proficiency, Tuvalu**



**Figure 2.6.6: Primary trained teachers, Tuvalu**



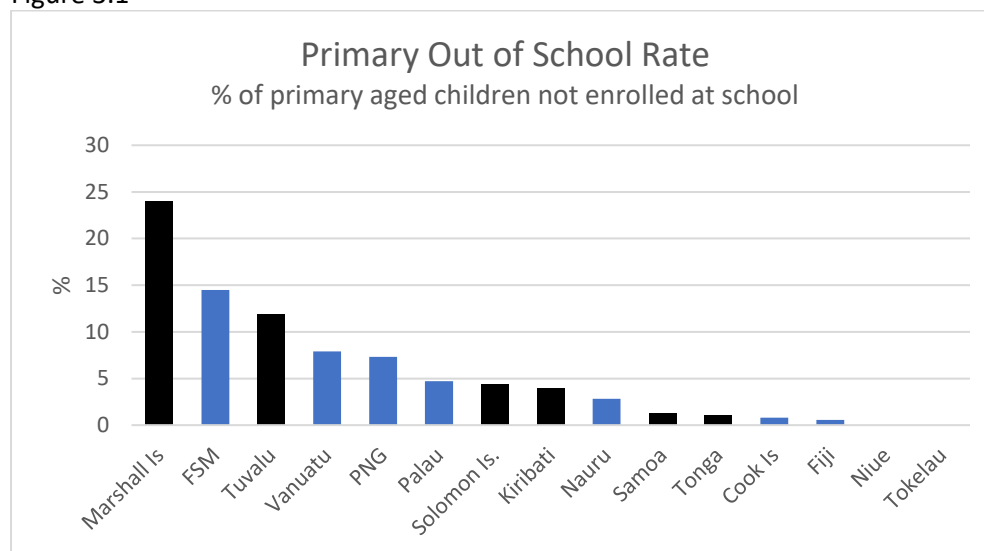
### 3. Comparative Perspectives

This section looks at the similarities and differences of the education system performance of the six GPE countries with the other Pacific Island countries and with other developing regions. Most of the comparative data are derived from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, which produces indicators using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The reported data for the latest year available was used for the following indicators.

#### 3.1 Participation and Completion

The six GPE countries are distributed across the range of out-of-school rates for primary education. Marshall Islands has the highest rate with close to 25% of children out of school; Tuvalu has a comparatively high rate of more than 10%; Solomon and Kiribati are located within the middle of the range with less than 5%; and Samoa and Tonga have relatively low rates (<2%). Figure 3.1 illustrates the variability in the out of school rates for the six GPE countries compared to other Pacific countries.

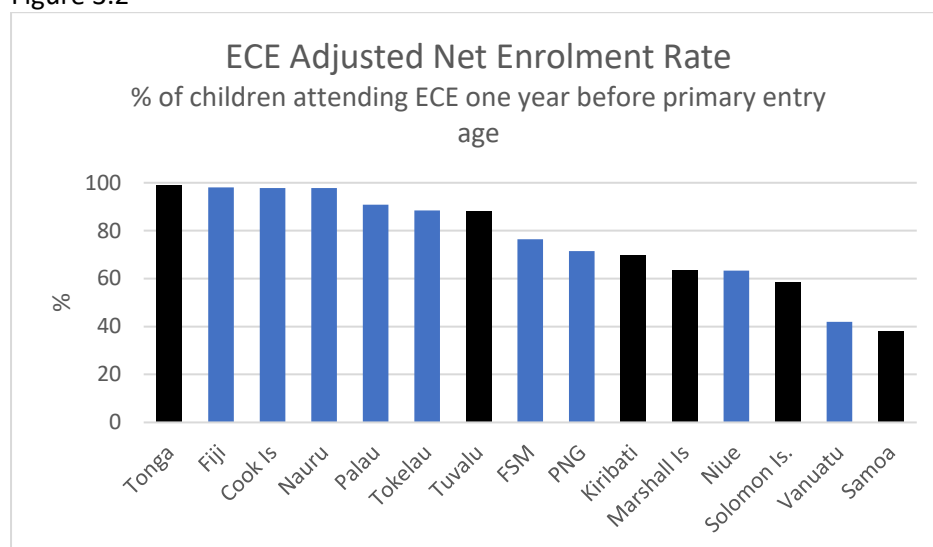
Figure 3.1



Source: UIS.Stat database

The six GPE countries are distributed across the range of participation rates for early childhood education, though most are located at the lower end of the distribution. Tonga has a comparatively high rate with almost all children participating in early childhood education; Tuvalu is in the middle of the range with nearly a 90% participation rate; Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands have relatively low rates of between 60 and 70%, and Samoa has the lowest participation with a rate of less than 40%. Figure 3.2 illustrates the variability in the participation rates for the six GPE countries compared to other Pacific countries.

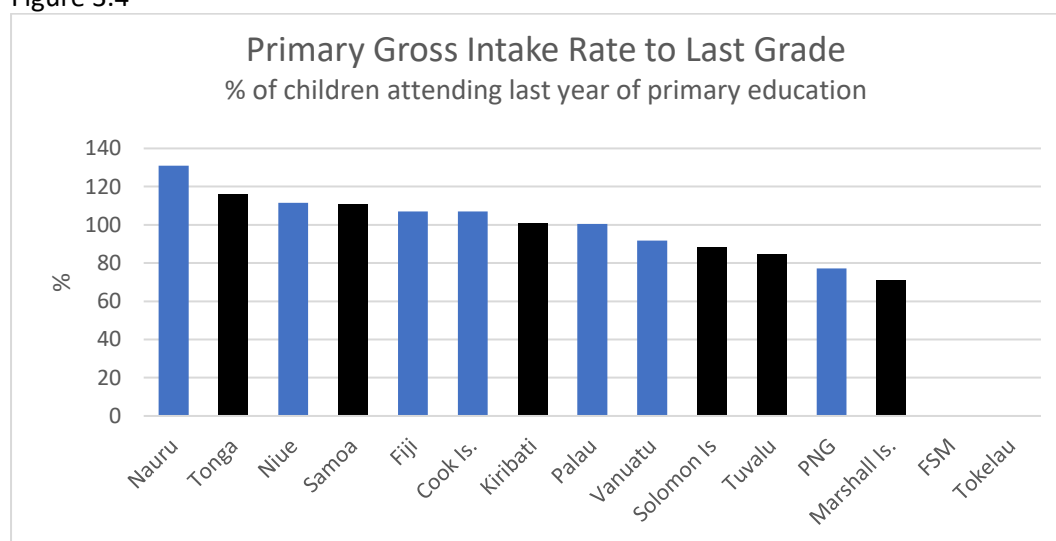
Figure 3.2



Source: UIS.Stat database

The gross intake rate to the last grade of primary education is a proxy for the population-based completion rate. The six GPE countries are evenly disbursed across the range of completion rates for primary education. Tonga and Samoa have comparatively high rates with more than 100% of students enrolled in the last grade of primary education compared to the population of official age; Kiribati is in the middle of the range with nearly a 100% completion rate; Solomon Islands and Tuvalu have relatively low rates of more than 80%, and Marshall Islands has the lowest completion rate with around 70%. Figure 3.4 illustrates the variability in the completion rates for the six GPE countries compared to other Pacific countries.

Figure 3.4



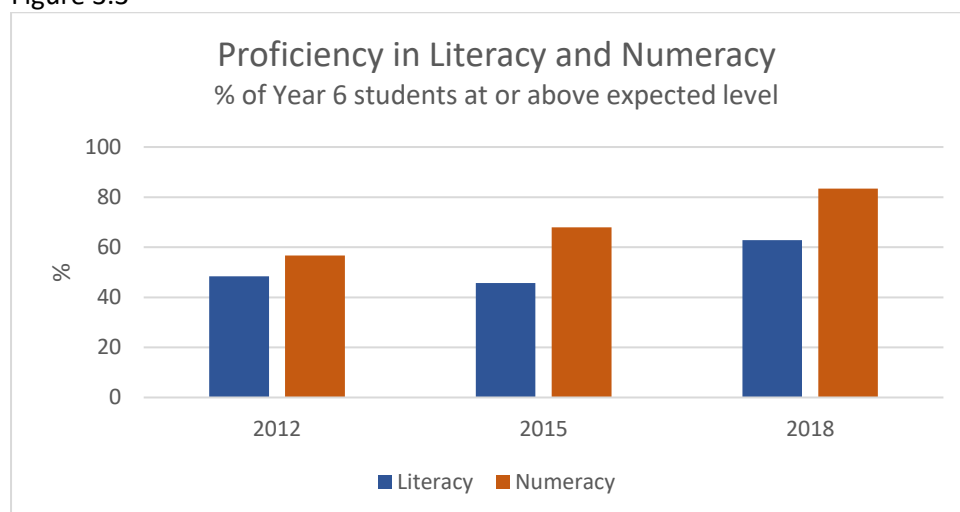
Source: UIS.Stat database

### 3.2 Literacy and Numeracy

The comparative indicators for measuring proficiency in reading and math are derived from the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA), which is conducted every three years by the SPC Educational Quality and Assessment Programme. The 2018 regional PILNA report provides data on

the literacy and numeracy levels achieved for Year 6 grade of primary education. Figure 3.3 shows that more than 60% of students achieve the expected level for literacy and more than 80% achieve the expected level for numeracy. While individual country data is reported only at the national level, it is likely that the data for the six GPE countries will be distributed around these central values.

Figure 3.3

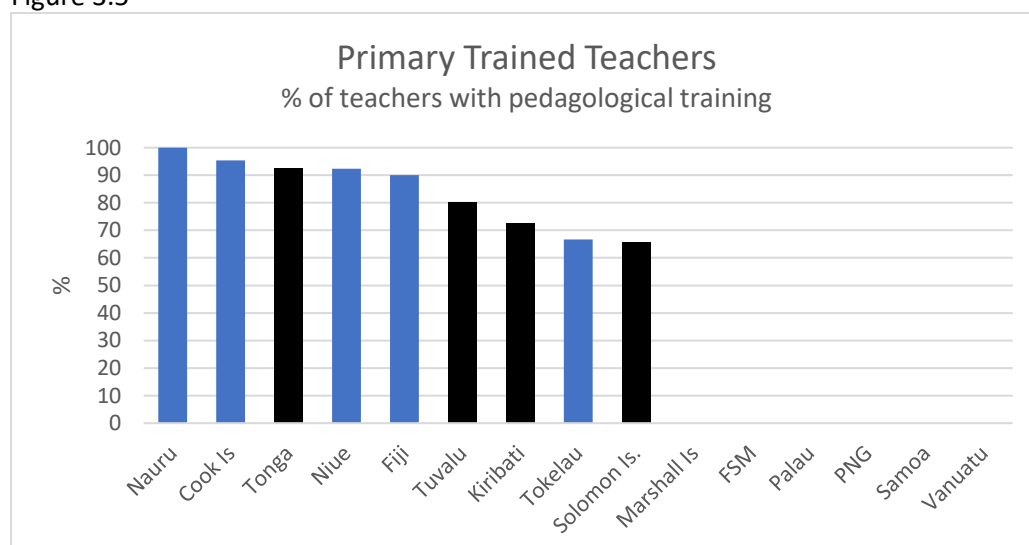


Source: PILNA Regional Report, 2018

### 3.3 Teachers

The percentage of primary school teachers who are trained in teaching pedagogy is an indicator of the quality of the teaching in primary education. However, it is not possible to make comparisons for all six GPE countries as Samoa, Marshall Islands and other Pacific Island countries have not reported this data. Three of the countries are at the lower end of the reported distribution with less than 80% of primary teachers trained. Tonga has a relatively high proportion with more than 90% of teachers trained. Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of the percentages of trained teachers in primary education for the six GPE countries compared to other Pacific countries.

Figure 3.5

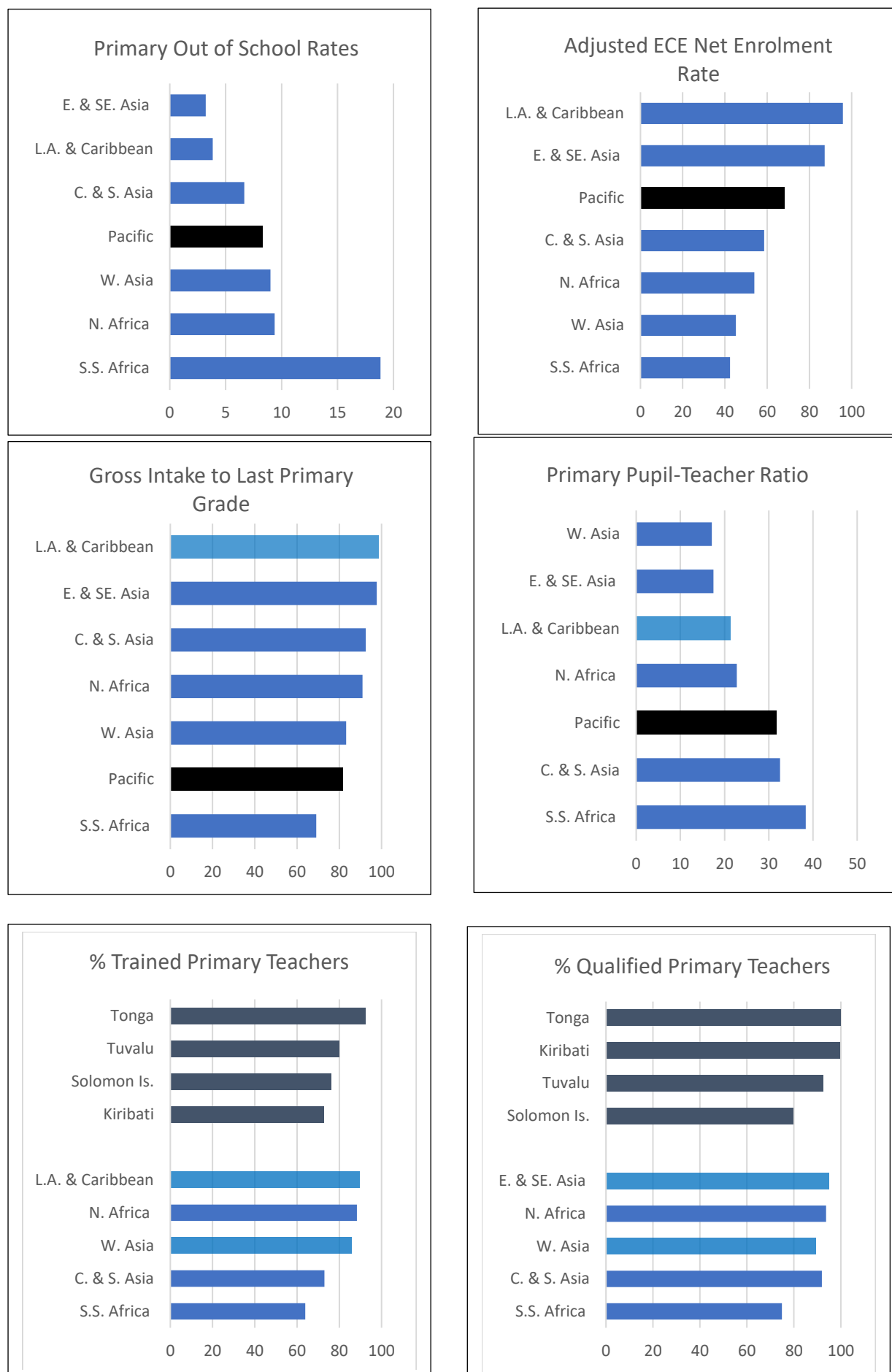


Note: some countries do not report the number of trained teachers.

Source: UIS.Stat database



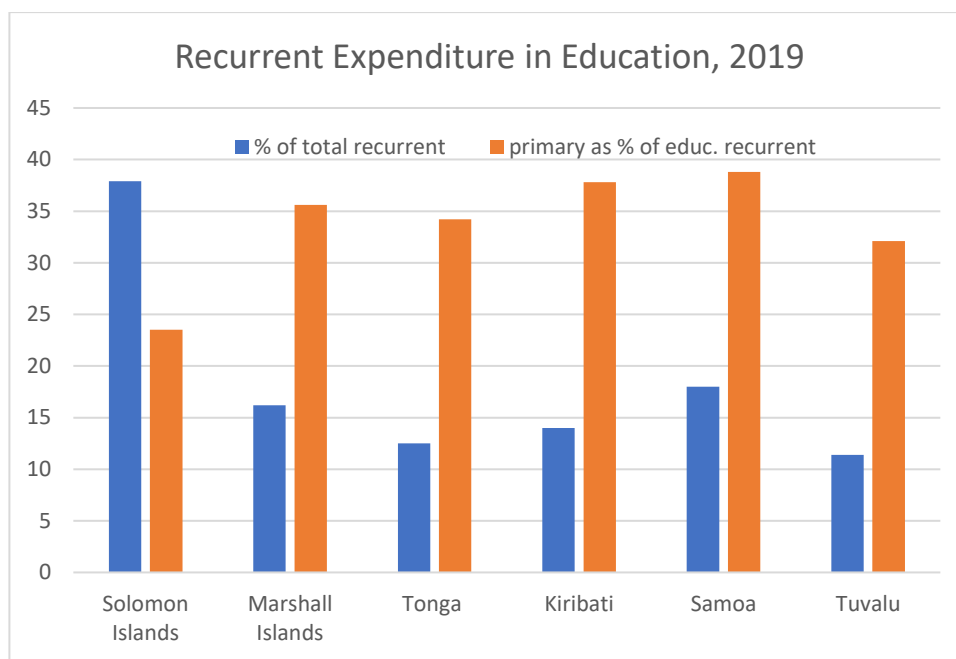
Figure 3.6: Pacific Region Comparisons with Developing Regions



### 3.4 Education Finance

Education recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total government recurrent expenditure (excluding debt) is shown for the six GPE countries in 2019 in Figure 3.7. Solomon Islands spends by far the most (37.9%), followed by Samoa (18.0%), Marshall Islands (16.2%), Kiribati (14.0%), Tonga (12.5%), and Tuvalu (11.4%). Recurrent spending on primary education as a percentage of the recurrent education budget was Samoa (38.8%), Kiribati (37.8%), Marshall Islands (35.6%), Tonga (34.2%), Tuvalu (32.1%), and Solomon Islands (23.5%).

Figure 3.7



Source: National education budget documents and data provided to the PacREF PFU April 2020

Table 3.1 Budgeted Actual and Projected Recurrent Education Expenditure 2019 -2023 for 6 GPE Countries

	Actual 2019 education recurrent as % of total recurrent (ex. debt)	Actual 2019 primary education recurrent as % of total education recurrent	Budgeted 2020 education recurrent as % of total recurrent (ex. debt)	Budgeted 2020 primary education recurrent as % of total education recurrent	Projected 2021 education recurrent as % of total recurrent (ex. debt)	Projected 2021 primary education recurrent as % of total education recurrent	Projected 2022 education recurrent as % of total recurrent (ex. debt)	Projected 2022 primary education recurrent as % of total education recurrent	Projected 2023 education recurrent as % of total recurrent (excl debt)	Projected 2023 primary education recurrent as % of total education recurrent
Kiribati	14.0	37.8	14.0	39.7	14.7	39.0	15.3	40.1	15.8	40.5
RMI	16.2	35.6	19.2	30.4	20.0	30.5	20.4	30.5	20.8	30.5
Samoa	18.0	38.8	18.1	37.3	18.8	37.3	19.6	37.2	20.5	37.2
Solomon Islands	37.9	23.5	40.0	24.6	40.0	26.0	40.0	25.8	40.0	26.4
Tonga	12.5	34.2	12.6	35.1	14.1	37.3	15.7	39.6	17.6	42.1
Tuvalu	11.4	32.1	11.4	47.9	12.1	44.0	12.8	42.0	13.6	40.1

Source: National education budget documents and data provided to the PacREF PFU April 2020

## 4. Shared Strengths and Challenges and the Role of PacREF

### 4.1 Shared Strengths and Challenges

This section discusses common strengths and the challenges across the six GPE countries' education systems. It also looks at the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) and how it can assist countries to build on their strengths and to meet the challenges they face, as it works to improve system performance across the Pacific region.

On the whole, across the Pacific relatively few children are not enrolled in and attending school. Evidence suggests that is in large part due to the free and compulsory nature of schooling and to the widely shared value placed on schooling that ensures that where there is access there is participation. Unfortunately, some Pacific countries face serious difficulties in providing schooling in remote and isolated areas and on distant islands. In many of these instances, children are required to either travel far or to relocate to attend school.

While not currently expecting to be able to provide financial support to countries to build schools or associated facilities in underserved areas, the PacREF will support all other aspects of the provision of quality and relevant schooling to all children across the Pacific region. Working together with national governments and development partners the PacREF will provide a significant contribution to efforts to ensure that all children have access to and participate in a relevant and rewarding primary education.

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

Almost all Pacific children attend and complete primary education. While high primary completion rates reflecting both government and societal commitment to all children gaining a basic education are region-wide strengths, we are seeing a troubling decline in completion rates in two countries. It is thought that the policies of automatic promotion that most Pacific countries maintain are also contributing factors to the high completion rates, as they have the effect of retaining students in the system and lessening the occurrence of children dropping out between grades. We should note that secondary completion rates are universally lower than primary completion rates for secondary education, for a number reasons including, to few secondary places in some countries, geographic factors, alternative pathways for technical and vocational education, and examination-based barriers to secondary enrolment.

National assessments of literacy and numeracy show that far too many Pacific children are not learning to read, comprehend what they read and to write at expected levels. The fact that a substantial percentage of children do not achieve the expected curriculum outcomes for literacy is a critical system shortfall across almost all Pacific countries. Most children, however, do well in math in national assessments and are proficient in numeracy.

The regional assessments (PILNA) show that there have been significant improvements in literacy and numeracy over the three-year period 2015-2018. For Year 6 students, almost two-thirds of students

meet the regional literacy proficiency levels in 2018 compared to less than half in 2015. While two-thirds of Year 6 students were proficient in numeracy in 2015, this increased to eight out of ten students now meeting the expected standard.

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

## 4.2 The Role of the PacREF

Over three four-year phases, the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) will operationalise the commitments of Member States to raise the quality of their education systems, improve learners' outcomes, and to produce high quality graduates.

In response to the serious performance challenges that Pacific education systems face, the PacREF offers Pacific countries access to an integrated set of regional tools and mechanisms designed to assist them to meet their education objectives. To meet this obligation, the PacREF shapes the investment of significant regional resources in a sustained strengthening of key regional agencies so that they can consistently provide Pacific-focused goods and services and can help to embed a series of Pacific education standards such as teacher competences. The Framework provides a means for identifying and understanding similarities and differences across the region: it offers organizing mechanisms for sector planning, reporting and collaboration, and, importantly, it provides development partners with an understanding of where the region's resourcing priorities lie.

The PacREF prioritises action on quality and relevance, learning pathways, student outcomes and well-being, and on the teaching profession. Its primary objective is to ensure sustainable gains in student learning outcomes across the Pacific. It is committed to inclusive learning: it recognizes and responds to the disadvantages faced by groups and communities in accessing education and/or training, including girls, young women, youth, persons with disabilities, rural communities and minority groups<sup>3</sup>. Importantly, the PacREF will direct significant resources to ensuring that education is relevant to all Pacific children. It will strengthen classroom practices and provide the tools through which the region's education systems' can provide schools with competent, motivated teachers. By supporting the development of alternative learning pathways and investing in national and regional assessment systems the PacREF will seek to ensure Pacific students experience an attractive educational experience and master the necessary skills to successfully move through their education in a timely and rewarding manner.

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

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<sup>3</sup> The Framework aligns with the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration in striving towards gender parity in informal, primary, secondary and tertiary education and training. It also supports the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2025 and responds to its goal of expanding early intervention and education of children with disabilities.

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

## Appendix: SDG 4 and PacREF Links

The SDG 4 targets and relevant Education 2030 indicators are mapped to the PacREF monitoring framework. The mapping will enable the reporting of SDG 4 global and thematic indicators for regional and international reporting purposes and reduce the response burden placed on small Pacific Island countries by data requests from regional and international agencies. However only official data approved by Pacific Island countries will be used in regional and international databases and publications.

### PacREF and SDG4 links

<b>Area 1 Quality and relevance</b> 1.1 Relevant curriculum 1.2 Broad-based learning 1.3 Responsive learning 1.4 Quality learning environment	1.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.3.1	4.4.1	4.5.1		
	1.2					4.4		4.7	4.7.1
	1.3	4.1						4.7	4.7.1
	1.4	4.1						4.7	4a
<b>Area 2 Learning pathways</b> 2.1. Enabling policy environment 2.2 Inclusive participation 2.3 School readiness 2.4 Learning pathways	2.1	4.1	4.2	4.3					
	2.2	4.1	4.2			4.5	4.5.1		
	2.3		4.2						
	2.4		4.2	4.3	4.4	4.3.1	4.4.1		
<b>Area 3 Student outcomes and well-being</b> 3.1 Literacy and numeracy 3.2 Improve system wide outcomes 3.3 Social skills	3.1	4.1				4.5	4.6	4.6.1	
	3.2		4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5			
	3.3						4.7	4.7.1	
<b>Area 4 Teaching profession</b> 4.1 Qualified, certified, competent teachers 4.2 Professional development and support of teachers 4.3 Professional and social status of teachers	4.1								4c (4c1)
	4.2								4c (4c1)
	4.3								4c (4c1)
<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4</b> <b>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b> 4.1 Universal primary and secondary education 4.2 Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education 4.3 Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education 4.4 Relevant skills for decent work 4.5 Gender equality and inclusion 4.6 Universal youth literacy 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship 4.a Effective learning environments 4.b Scholarships 4.c Teachers and educators									

Source: UNESCO

## PacREF Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- 1 Quality and Relevance**
  - 1.1 Percentage of primary and secondary schools meeting national minimum service standards
  - 1.2 Percentage of primary schools with vernacular instruction in first three years
  - 1.3 Percentage of primary and secondary schools with access to drinking water and basic sanitation
  - 1.4 Percentage of primary and secondary schools with access to computers for pedagogical use
  - 1.5\* Out-of-school rate for primary, lower and upper secondary education
  - 1.6 Percentage of children over-age for grade in primary and lower secondary education
  
- 2 Learning Pathways**
  - 2.1\* Participation rate of youth & adults in formal/non-formal education/training in last 12 months
  - 2.2 Gross/Net enrolment rates (GER/NER) in early childhood, primary, secondary & tertiary education
  - 2.3\* Participation rate in early childhood education the year before primary education
  - 2.4 Transition rates between primary, secondary and tertiary education
  - 2.5 Retention rates for primary & secondary education
  - 2.6\* Youth participation rate in technical-vocational education (TVET) programmes
  
- 3 Student Outcomes**
  - 3.1 Educational attainment rate for secondary, TVET and tertiary education
  - 3.2 Percentage of pre-school children that are school ready
  - 3.3\* Percentage of primary students achieving proficiency in (English) literacy
  - 3.4\* Percentage of primary students achieving proficiency in (Maths) numeracy
  - 3.5\* Gross intake ratio to the last grade (GIRLY) for primary & lower/upper secondary education
  - 3.6\* Completion rate for primary & lower/upper secondary education
  
- 4 Teaching Profession**
  - 4.1 Percentage of teachers meeting professional standards in primary & secondary education
  - 4.2\* Percentage of trained teachers in primary & secondary education
  - 4.3 Percentage of qualified teachers in primary & secondary education
  - 4.4 Student - teacher ratio by education level for qualified and trained teachers in primary & secondary education
  - 4.5 Percentage of teachers having annual professional development in primary & secondary education

Note: \* = Priority Indicators

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