

# COALITION FOR EDUCATION SOLOMON ISLANDS (COESI)

## CSO SPOTLIGHT KEY MESSAGES ON SDG 4

*Accelerating actions for transformative and resilient education amidst COVID-19*



### SOLOMON ISLANDS

**Population:**  
686,717 (2020)

**SDG 4 Dashboard:**  
Major Challenges

**SDG 4 Trend:**  
↓ Decreasing

**SDG 10 Dashboard:**  
Major challenges

**HDI Value/Rank:**  
0.557, 153 (UNDP, 2019)

**GNI per Capita:**  
USD 2,050 (WB, 2019)

**Net Enrolment Rate:**  
Primary- 92%  
Junior Secondary- 38%  
Senior Secondary- 30%

**Education Expenditure:**  
13% of GDP (2017)  
33% of total government expenditure (2018)

The Coalition for Education Solomon Islands (COESI) welcomes the Solomon Islands Government's inclusion of civil society organisations (CSO), including COESI, in the Voluntary National Review process. COESI is pleased to have the opportunity to be part of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development's (MEHRD) consultative Local Education Group (LEG) but asks that it meet more often.

COESI also welcomes the efforts made by MEHRD to include the SDG agenda into their planning strategies and action plans. MEHRD also has its own Performance Annual Review process (PAR) that reports critically on a number of relevant indicators, which is published on their website.

We note the 2019 restructuring in the MEHRD with the formation of the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Skills Authority. COESI will be advocating strongly to this new division on priorities in this sector, seeking greater funding for Rural Training Centres, which offer skills for sustainable rural living suitable to the Solomons context. We also underscore the need to see a real recognition of the need for community learning initiatives addressing adults and out of school youth.

Whilst education spending as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of the budget both easily surpasses recommended levels, we note with concern the hugely disproportionate funding of the tertiary sector. The tertiary sector consumes 66% of the entire education budget, and the scholarship programme is out of control, consuming more than half of that. Spending is now a miserly US\$ 82 per primary student, but over US\$ 18,000 per tertiary student.



A key indicator for the MEHRD is enrolment, but only in the formal sector. While the Net Enrolment Rate for Primary in 2018 was at 91.8%, this drops only to 37% at Junior Secondary and 28.9% at Senior Secondary. There is little programmatic recognition of the many children and youth pushed out from the formal system at various transition points.

The MEHRD appears pleased with gender parity, and is also aware of the growing trend of girls performing 'significantly better than boys at both levels and across all strands.' However, marginalised groups – those living with disabilities, those in remote areas, and the rural and urban poor – are neither considered nor counted.

The number of school students classified as with a disability is at 1.3%<sup>4</sup> and 'based simply on teacher's anecdotal observational assessment of student disabilities in the classroom'. The vast majority of children with disabilities remain at home and receive no education. The MEHRD has developed an Inclusive Education Policy, but it remains in draft form, subject to perennial review.

COESI therefore urges that the large amount of funds allocated to the Rural Constituency Development Fund and Scholarships programmes be diverted to crucial areas – to community learning and literacy, skills for living initiatives, to build more classrooms especially for secondary students, to upgrade teachers skills, materials and school infrastructure with those with disabilities and most marginalised groups in mind, and to ensure truly free education for all as promised.

<sup>1</sup> Performance Assessment Report. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.mehrd.gov.sb/documents?view=download&format=raw&fileid=2059>  
<sup>2</sup> MEHRD Annual Report 2018  
<sup>3</sup> Performance Assessment Report. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.mehrd.gov.sb/documents?view=download&format=raw&fileid=2059>  
<sup>4</sup> Performance Assessment Report. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.mehrd.gov.sb/documents?view=download&format=raw&fileid=2059>



Coalition for Education Solomon Islands (COESI)  
Tel: (+677) 759 4871  
Email: [jack.coesi@gmail.com](mailto:jack.coesi@gmail.com)



Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)  
Tel/Fax: 63 2 441 4594  
Email: [aspbae@gmail.com](mailto:aspbae@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)