

# Papua New Guinea



■ A participant in an SDG 4 training in Jiwaka

## Executive Summary

# Civil Society Spotlight Report on the SDG 4 Implementation Status in Papua New Guinea

*An Analysis of PNG's progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 of Agenda 2030*

### COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES



TOTAL POPULATION:	8.2 million (UNESCO, 2017)
POPULATION AGED 14 YEARS AND YOUNGER:	2.965 million (UNESCO, 2017)
GNI PER CAPITA:	US\$ 2,340 (World Bank, 2017)
INCOME GROUP:	Lower Middle Income Status (World Bank, 2018)
HDI VALUE AND RANK:	0.544, 153 out of 189 (UNDP, 2017)
NET ENROLMENT RATIO IN BASIC EDUCATION:	85%
NET ENROLMENT RATIO IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:	12.7%
OUT OF SCHOOL :	254,607 children- 139,136 female and 115,471 male (UNESCO, 2016)
	43,022 adolescents- 29,984 female and 13,038 male (UNESCO, 2016)
	Half of all women aged 15 years have never attended school
	One-third of all men aged 15 years have never attended school
EXPENDITURE:	4.1% of the GDP and 11.9% of the total budget

### Policy and Planning and Aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4

The Government of Papua New Guinea, through the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM), developed a draft roadmap for integrating and aligning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national priorities. Highlighted in the roadmap was the need to adapt the SDG-related indicators into the country's context so they can be incorporated into the process of coordinated national development programming (UNFPA, 2017). SDG-related indicators would be accommodated in upcoming national surveys and censuses and could be sustained through the PNG Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2018 – 2027 for monitoring and evaluation processes. A technical working team called the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP)-SDG Secretariat was formed by the DNPM, the National Statistics Office (NSO), and the UNFPA.

The wide areas and issues covered by the targets and indicators of the SDGs signify that a large number of stakeholders would need to be involved to start the localisation process. In this direction, the Government and the UNFPA Country Team organised a two-month consultation with the aim of localising many of the SDG targets, 'customising' indicators, and coming up with 27 of their own for SDG 4 (UNFPA, 2017).

As of April 2019, the DNPM has not yet communicated with any of the departments to develop their SDG Framework, although they have appointed an officer to coordinate the work. The only document sighted from the Department of National Planning was the SDG Log frame for localisation developed in 2017 by the UNFPA.

There has been no localisation of SDG 4 at the sub-national level, and no integration or alignment of SDG 4 in Provincial and District Plans. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have not seen the Department of Education (NDoE) address SDG 4 in any of its documents. It has been



■ PEAN Coordinator David Kumie (leftmost) meets with SI Planning, Inclusion, and TVET representatives from the Ministry.

assumed that only after the department works on the integration and alignment of SDG 4 within their own plans will there be a possibility for localisation at the sub-national level.

There are serious gaps and weaknesses in the planning and implementation of SDG 4 in the country. Similar to the rollout of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the NDoE has not given serious attention to the implementation of SDG 4 as indicated by the following:

- No funding commitments for implementing SDG 4
- No SDG 4 framework developed
- No SDG 4 desk at the NDoE
- NDoE has not addressed SDG 4 in any specific document

The NDoE waited until the end of 2015 and then produced a Country Report on the MDGs from the ad hoc data collected from different sectors. In order to ensure better outcomes for SDG 4, the department needs to make concerted efforts to initiate the monitoring of relevant indicators and to align policies, programmes, and action plans with SDG 4. Papua New Guinea has decided to conduct the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2020. This is a significant opportunity for the government to scale up efforts to monitor, assess, and track progress on the SDGs, particularly SDG 4.

### Civil Society Engagement in SDG Implementation and Monitoring

The primary mode used by the government to consult with CSOs is the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC). However, there are doubts about the independence of the CIMC as it is run by the private sector-led Institute of National Affairs, which represents major industries and commerce in the country, and has only one CSO representative on the Board. It is chaired by the Minister for National Planning which reports directly to the government's National Executive Council.

The CIMC has an Education and Training Sector Committee that is comprised of the government, the private sector, and development partners, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, Australia's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and World Vision. Only one space is provided for an 'advocacy group (organisation)' on an occasional basis.

In 2017, the PNG government revived the Local Education Group, which is designed to facilitate better education development through better information exchange and coordination between the National Department of Education and development partners working in the education sector, such as Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy

Network (PEAN). While this is a positive development for general sectoral cooperation, there is no formal place for local CSOs in processes specifically evaluating the rollout of SDG 4 or indeed any SDG. The UN Country Team is the only organisation that has been organising consultative workshops and meetings about the SDGs.

### Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 Targets

While there have been no attempts by the government to align with SDG 4, it is useful to assess performance in the main SDG 4 targets.

#### Access

The introduction of the Tuition Fee Free (TFF) education via school grant transfers has led to a remarkable increase in enrolment rates. The gross enrolment rate for elementary increased from 138 per cent in 2013 to 158 per cent in 2016 and primary increased from 83 per cent to 98 per cent. Similarly, the net enrolment rate in basic education has also been increasing steadily from 72.2 per cent in 2013 to 85 per cent in 2016. However, the relatively rapid upsurge in student numbers brought about by the implementation of fee free education has put further pressure on the school infrastructure and the teachers. It results in the overcrowding of many urban schools with a student-teacher ratio of over 50:1. 'Access at the expense of quality' is the government's own assessment of its basic education performance. Hence, it is necessary to realise that the increase in the enrolment rates should be accompanied by an adequate number of trained teachers, as well as high-quality school infrastructures to better meet the needs of students.

#### Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

The Early Childhood Care and Development or ECCD is linked to three departments, namely the Department of Community Development and Religion (DfCDR), the NDoE, and the Department of Health (DoH), with the DfCDR leading takes more responsibility than DoE and DoH. Responsibility is fractured, and although policy has been developed, it lies dormant.

As a result, most of the ECCD programmes in the country are provided by an unregulated private sector with over 300 private schools. There is no single body regulating these schools nor is there any framework to guide and direct the development of ECCD establishment. As such, there is no data to monitor the progress on ECCD, including that of the workforce (e.g., qualifications). There is also a small number

of ECCD programmes provided by NGOs, churches, and through aid programmes. The government should ensure the public provision of ECCE, and inspect and regulate the hundreds of private ECCE schools in operation.

### ***Inclusion***

Quality education entails the inclusiveness of participation of all, regardless of age, class, gender, disability, geographic location, and socio-economic status. The government should thus provide policies, programmes, and resources that promote and support the inclusion of the most marginalised groups who are left behind. However, this is not the case as students from remote rural areas or poor families, female students, and children with disabilities fare worse than their counterparts, and are less likely to attend school or complete basic education.

Papua New Guinea has enacted policies and signed several international treaties relevant to the provision of education services to children living with disabilities. Despite these advances, there are missed linkages between policy and implementation. The government has made only a very small amount of funding available to educate children with disabilities. Rather, it has been left largely to civil society organisations to address the financing and implementation gaps.

The great majority of government documentation refers to special education, while there has been little specific mention of policy or approaches on fully Inclusive Education. Implementation has been concentrated on Special Education Resource Centres, or recently known as Inclusive Education Resource Centres, which are considered as the implementing agents. These resource centres were originally intended to support teachers as they implement inclusive education for children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Instead, they have become the primary institutions responsible for educating children with disabilities, segregating them from the mainstream.

Although girls' participation at the elementary level is at par with boys, the enrolment of girls steadily deteriorates in higher grades. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) illustrates the decline in girls' enrolment rate as well as the significant differences between provinces. In sum, girls are much less likely to transition to secondary or upper secondary school.

### ***Gender Parity Index by sector (Department of Education EMIS, 2016)***

SECTOR	GPI	HIGHEST PROVINCE	LOWEST PROVINCE
Elementary	1.00	1.07	0.89
Primary	0.94	1.15	0.81
Secondary	0.85	1.37	0.58

### ***Transition rates by sector and gender (Department of Education EMIS, 2016)***

	GR 8 TO 9	GR 10 TO 11
Male	61%	48%
Female	57%	44%
Total	59%	47%
GPI	0.92	0.91

From GPE BEST programme documentation

### ***Quality***

The quality of education in Papua New Guinea is not assessed comprehensively. Examination results are used, and there was a Curriculum Standard Monitoring Test (CSMT) which was eventually replaced by the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) in recent years. These tests found students in primary performing worse than any peers in the Pacific region. Students in urban schools out-performed those in non-urban schools and there was a significant variation between provinces in literacy and numeracy.

The Outcomes-Based Curriculum (OBC) was criticised for the difficulties it presented in planning and assessment, and for its considerable demands on resources. The curriculum design shifted from OBC to a Standards-Based Curriculum (SBC) which provides more support to teachers, and has more time allocated for core subjects. The SBC was introduced as a result of the Czuba report (2013) and was implemented in elementary education in 2015 and primary education on 2017. However, teaching and learning materials for the new SBC are lacking.

Another critical issue in elementary schools is the proportion of teachers without the official teaching qualification requirements. Many elementary teachers have limited literacy skills. Other challenges include poor quality initial teacher training; poor in-service teacher education and system administration; difficulties of inspecting and supporting schools and teachers in remote areas; and shortages of well- trained specialist teachers.

The NDoE has had a Literacy Secretariat for a very long time, and there are literacy coordinators in almost all the provinces in the country. There are few funds available in the education budget for literacy work with the out-of-school or adult population. Currently, the churches, CSOs, and NGOs are the only institutions conducting literacy training at subnational levels. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has funded a consortia of NGOs to carry out literacy and numeracy programmes in ten provinces.

### ***Financing***

Public Expenditure on Education is running at 2.9 billion kina (US\$ 860 million). This represents 11.9 per cent of total public expenditure and 4.1 per cent of the GDP.

The basic education sector absorbs the majority of expenditure, which is largely spent on teachers' salaries and the Tuition Fee Free (TFF). The TFF system has been plagued by difficulties, with its system of component disbursements

highly criticised. Most schools only receive part of the grant with the infrastructure component left in the hands of politically swayed District Implementation Committees, and the materials component kept by the government for opaque tendering of poor quality materials, many of which never arrive, particularly in remote provinces.

### **Key Recommendations**

Providing equal access to quality and inclusive education for all is integral for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, many challenges persist in the basic education sector. Among these challenges are the overcrowded classrooms due to inadequate infrastructure and teacher shortages; the poor student performance and high repetition rates; the absence of publicly provided Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE); the inadequate attention towards attaining inclusive education; the insufficient funding for TVET and the lack of clear or available pathways for the large majority of the children. The government's concrete action plans and target investments, as well as the civil society's concerted efforts, are urgently needed in order to address these problems. The report recommends the following:

#### **On Access**

- Pilot practical solutions to attain optimal student – teacher ratios.
- Establish more secondary schools to increase the capacity of the secondary sectors to absorb all students completing primary education (Grade 8), lower secondary education (Grade 10), and the proposed compulsory education policy.
- Train existing teachers in elementary, primary, and secondary education in order to meet the required teaching standards.

#### **On Inclusion**

- Develop and implement a strategy for the most vulnerable groups, such as girls, older children, and children living with disabilities, who can be promoted to focused programmes, alternative pathways or complementary opportunities to continue schooling at higher levels instead of the system pushing them out at the main transition point, particularly at the end of Grades 8 and 10.
- Formulate and implement pro-poor policies by adhering to the SDG target of providing 12 years of free basic education, reaching out particularly to the most vulnerable children, and covering not only fees but also additional expenses related to schooling.

#### **On Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)**

- Strengthen the coordination of ECCD in the country and ensure the policy is fully implemented.
- Develop a national ECCD framework.

#### **On Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

- Establish TVET schools in each district to meet the current and future demand.
- Develop the TVET curriculum within the PNG National Qualification Framework and Standard.
- Integrate PNG NQF into TVET and higher education qualifications to provide well-defined pathways.
- Provide equitable, market-driven, and evidence-based national policies and plans for vocational skills development, TVET and tertiary education, primary education (Grade 8) and lower secondary education (Grade 10), and the proposed compulsory education policy.
- Provide scholarships for TVET teachers to upgrade their trade skills, acquire teaching qualifications, and learn the techniques of competency-based training.

#### **On Gender**

- Review the Gender Policy and Gender Equity Strategic Plan to utilise the latest research findings and interventions.
- Integrate the Gender Strategic Plan into the future National Education Plan and Provincial Education Plans.

#### **On Literacy**

- Initiate a government funded literacy survey, and disseminate the findings across different platforms in each province to develop action plans to address literacy at the province and district levels.
- Allocate adequate and sustained funding to implement quality literacy programmes at the provincial and district levels.

#### **On Civil Society Involvement**

- The government must make efforts to genuinely involve all stakeholders, in particular civil society organisations working in the education sector. This involvement should not be just to provide services where the government does not, but also to participate in the policy formulation and monitoring and evaluation levels.

#### **On Financing**

- Mobilise the community and civil society to enable CSOs to monitor public funds, and to strengthen and raise the awareness of communities with the aim of increasing the number of girls and women enrolled in public schools. •



### **PAPUA NEW GUINEA EDUCATION ADVOCACY NETWORK (PEAN)**

PO Box 422, Konedobu, NCD, Papua New Guinea

Tel: (675) 323 7768 | Email: pean.png@gmail.com

Website: <https://pngeducationadvocacynetworkeducation2030.wordpress.com>

The Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) was established in 2003 by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to advocate on basic and adult education policy and key education program issues in Papua New Guinea in line with EFA and now Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Education 2030. The organisation has been advocating and promoting life-long learning increased levels of literacy opportunities for all citizens including disadvantaged groups, such as the poor people, women and girls. PEAN is a member organisation of ASPBAE.



Asia South Pacific Association  
for Basic and Adult Education

Learning Beyond Boundaries

**ASIA SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR BASIC AND ADULT EDUCATION (ASPBAE)** is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning.

Unit 106 Sterten Place Condominium  
116 Maginhawa Street, Teachers Village East, Diliman  
Quezon City 1101, Philippines

Tel/Fax: 63 2 441 4594  
Email: [aspbae@gmail.com](mailto:aspbae@gmail.com) | Website: [www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)

ISBN: 978-621-95859-0-3