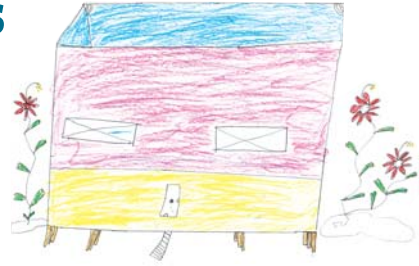


## Future Directions for Pacific Education and Training



**A**chieving equity in access to schooling, opportunities to learn, and results—especially for children from low-income families—are challenges that many education systems continue to struggle with. Addressing them in PDMCs will require policies explicitly designed to promote learning at a high level and resource mobilization strategies that draw on private and public sources. Effective education service delivery requires more than the provision of resources to the education sector. Deploying the resources efficiently and equitably and using them effectively for instruction is key. This is especially important in those PDMCs where high levels of expenditure have not resulted in the anticipated improvements in instructional effectiveness and student performance. This section discusses some key priorities for education development that countries may wish to consider as they develop strategies to improve the quality, equity, and efficiency of their education service. Clearly, these strategies will vary for every PDMC and each country will need to define what its priorities are given the specific education, social, and economic development challenges it faces.

## Confronting the Challenge of Equitable Access and Quality

Chapter 3 has shown that throughout the Pacific enhancing the supply of quality basic education services is likely to remain an education development priority for some time to come. Demand for education is generally strong, although problems of quality, accessibility, relevance, and cost can frustrate demand especially among disadvantaged groups. There is reason to believe that an effective supply strategy will trigger a strong demand response. Box 3 illustrates how a policy designed to expand equitable access to education of improved quality was implemented in Samoa.

### Box 3

#### Samoa: Addressing Access and Quality

The gross primary enrollment rate is high in Samoa, but of the 35,790 children in primary school in 1999, 76% could enroll only in 138 very poor quality village schools run by school committees. Only three primary schools in the heart of the urban center of Malifa with 9% of the students were directly under government control. These schools were overcrowded, with large classes and very high pupil-teacher ratios. Despite these adverse conditions, a large number of primary school graduates from these schools gained entry to government senior colleges. The good academic record of these schools reinforced the strong demand from parents to have their children educated in Malifa. The government policy of running only three schools equipped with good facilities created inequitable access to better-quality education for the majority of Samoan students. Many families from outer islands and far away villages cannot afford to send their children to Malifa. With ADB support through the Education Sector Project: Loan 1752-SAM, the government decentralized the system to ensure political commitment, ownership, and community participation. A series of subprojects ensured more equitable access to schooling by upgrading and/or expanding selected public primary and secondary schools throughout the country. Three schools in Malifa are being restructured into a single primary school and refurbished to provide integrated facilities for a maximum of 750 students from villages in the immediate vicinity. This school will be managed and run by a school committee thus transferring the ownership from the government. Simultaneously, six other public primary schools have been rehabilitated in six villages in the greater Apia urban area and have absorbed the excess of students from the three schools at Malifa.

Source: ADB Samoa review mission reports.

There is increasingly robust knowledge based on the experience with strategies for quality improvement in developing countries<sup>48</sup> that can guide the development of national programs. Box 4 summarizes the strategic priorities and results areas that this research suggests for consideration by PDMCs in the light of the analyses in Chapter 3. A few key points are worth highlighting. First, policies to improve quality and equity cannot be separated. Over the past two decades the goal of education policy has shifted from equal opportunity to enroll to universal enrollment and more recently to universal completion. Without high-quality instruction, the latter cannot be accomplished. Quality is inextricably linked with equity. Recent analyses from a large number of developing countries confirm that poverty, rural residence, and gender persist as the strongest negative correlates of school attendance and performance. The impact of poverty on enrollment, retention, and completion is particularly striking (Filmer 2001). While data on PDMCs are scarce, those that are available confirm a similar pattern.

There is little doubt that in particular the high direct cost of education to parents is a reason why poor children do not enter school or drop out early.<sup>49</sup> In response, many countries have implemented free primary education policies in recent years. Where governments decide to levy fees, they will need to make sure that arrangements are in place to ensure that no child is excluded from school because of inability to pay. Free basic education is the policy in most PDMCs, but small tuition fees are often charged as in Samoa and Tuvalu. Furthermore, education is not really free when families have to purchase books, stationery, uniforms, and transport. For poorer families, opportunity costs may also be significant. Efforts should be made to reduce the costs for poor children and for those at risk. This may involve fee waivers or cash subsidies for the purchase of textbooks and supplies. The challenge is to ensure that such subsidies are well targeted and appropriately and transparently accounted for. Decision making at the school and community level has been found to be the most effective way to prevent misdirection or misappropriation.

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<sup>48</sup> See for example UNESCO 2004b and Verspoor forthcoming.

<sup>49</sup> African countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda which recently abolished primary school fees have seen dramatic increases in their enrollments.

Box 4

**Strategic Priorities for Education Development that Pacific Developing Member Countries May Want to Consider of Students from the Three Schools at Malifa**

**Vision :** Improved education outcomes

**Goal :** Enhancing education service delivery for the poor

Strategic Objective	Expected Results
<p>1. Confront the challenge of equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children enroll in a primary school of acceptable quality.</li> <li>• Community-based preschool programs are widely available.</li> <li>• Public resources are targeted to ensure gender equity and equitable opportunities to learn for students from disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>• Nonformal programs provide education and training opportunities for adolescents and adults who never went to school or who dropped out early.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Transform public, private, and development partner resources into learning results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources are allocated to the most cost-effective inputs.</li> <li>• Essential inputs are available to all schools.</li> <li>• A culture of high quality with a focus on learning achievement exists.</li> <li>• Curricula are adapted to local context.</li> <li>• Improved teacher competence and effective classroom practices are evident.</li> <li>• School-level resources are used effectively and efficiently.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Strengthen capacity to manage and deliver the education service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT potential is exploited for improved access, quality and efficiency.</li> <li>• Resources are deployed efficiently.</li> <li>• School leadership is strengthened and effectively supported.</li> <li>• Organizational structure and incentive to support good quality service delivery are in place.</li> <li>• Local control of resources and accountability systems is strengthened.</li> <li>• Education management information system provides timely statistics and performance indicators.</li> <li>• Opportunities for innovation are tested and promoted.</li> <li>• Regional technical resources are successfully exploited.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Promote education sector strategies and development processes that are relevant and respond to national objectives and needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector programs provide coherent and financially sustainable framework for investment and policy reform.</li> <li>• Sector-wide approaches strengthen government leadership and enhance coordination and harmonization of programs supported by external partners.</li> <li>• Effective systems for monitoring and evaluation provide the basis for progress reporting and joint review of development results.</li> <li>• Cost-effective strategies for further education and skills development are an integral part of the sector program.</li> <li>• Participatory processes for the design and implementation of education development programs including governments, civil society, and private providers are strengthened.</li> <li>• Regional cooperation supports the effectiveness and efficiency of national programs.</li> </ul>

Source: ADB Samoa review mission reports.

## Transforming Resources into Results

Investing increasingly scarce resources in cost-effective inputs, i.e., inputs that produce high increases in learning achievement per dollar invested, must be a priority for education systems that face increasingly severe financial constraints but at the same time aim to improve student-learning outcomes. Some key findings (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991; Verspoor forthcoming) that are important to consider in resource allocation decisions are listed below.

- The academic level of teachers has variable effects. More than 12 years of general education may not have much impact on student learning, but language competency is a key variable.
- Teacher development is likely to be most effective with a relatively short, practice-focused, professional pre-service program followed by continuous in-service training and support.
- One book per pupil in core subjects is likely to enhance learning achievement significantly.
- Pre-school attendance has a positive impact on student learning.
- Time available for learning has an important impact on achievement.
- Repetition rarely has a lasting effect on student learning and is correlated with high dropout.
- Double shift systems are almost always detrimental to learning.
- Multi-grade<sup>50</sup> systems usually have no negative impact and enhance learning when well designed and implemented.

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<sup>50</sup> Multi-grade instruction is the practice where one teacher instructs a group of students who work at different grade levels. The one-room schoolhouse is the most extreme form of this.

As important as the cost-effective provision of inputs but much less well understood is the development of a culture that explicitly aims to promote quality and learning. Such a culture of quality is driven and sustained by a set of values and beliefs on the process of teaching and learning—a theory and practice of education and a vision of educational practice—that is widely shared. Key features are the following:

- values that place learning at the center;
- a belief that failure is not an inevitable part of the education process and that all children can learn given time and appropriate instruction;
- a commitment to equitable outcomes and a readiness to adapt inputs and processes to students' learning needs;
- an improvement process that does not simply define outcomes and standards but that focuses also on the means—on the processes and the skills required to bring about quality results;
- a dedication to universal quality learning based on diversity and flexibility in delivery mechanisms and instructional practice.

Moving toward such a system means changing the way stakeholders think about schools and schooling, but it also means providing schools with the resources—especially nonsalary ones that can be managed at the school level. Individual school leadership in such a system becomes critically important. Effective systems of school supervision and support are a key part of the institutional set-up. Making this transition toward a high-quality system will require changes in the way resources are financed and managed. International experience suggests that it will also require a continuous investment in the professional and subject matter training of teachers, head teachers, technical specialists, and managers. This is the heart of the capacity building challenge.

## Strengthen Capacity to Manage and Deliver the Education Service

No matter how good project designs are and how many resources are available, if a country does not have the people, institutions, and systems to manage the programs and the resources to provide services of quality, the anticipated outcomes are unlikely to materialize. Almost all PDMCs allocate above average levels of resources to their education sectors and receive significant external funding, yet the outcomes are often less than satisfactory. Strengthening the capacity to deliver the education service efficiently and effectively is therefore a *sine qua non* for bringing about improvements in education quality and equity. Specific mechanisms need to be developed for small island countries with dispersed populations and where service delivery is difficult. A major challenge for PDMCs will be to think through how such changes can be best initiated in a region where much of the population is clustered in small settlements spread over a large area and to identify the strengths of the existing systems that can be built on.

***Deploying Resources Efficiently.*** Increasing the efficiency of teacher deployment will be an inescapable part of quality improvement strategies in several countries. In many instances, this may involve increasing school sizes. Since the school catchment area is often limited by geography, this may require increases in school size by offering the full basic education cycle in every school by transferring junior secondary grades to primary school to make them part of basic education, possibly in combination with a system of satellite or cluster schools. This has been done in PNG. (See Box 5.) A more efficient deployment of teachers resulting in an increase in the STR would free up resources to increase the supply of instructional materials, or to provide incentives to teachers working in difficult circumstances, or to recognize exceptional performance.<sup>51</sup>

***Management Information.*** A major constraint to improvements in the management of education is the paucity of education statistics. This is a serious issue particularly in the smaller countries. Basic

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<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that it is not always politically possible to be efficient, e.g., by amalgamating small schools, especially where, as in the Fiji Islands and Samoa case, government does not own the schools.

## Box 5

**Restructuring the Education System in Papua New Guinea**

The original formal primary education system of six years of primary then four to seven years of secondary is well on the way to being transformed into three years of elementary, six years of primary (up to class 8), two years of junior secondary, and two to three years of senior secondary. Elementary education includes a preliminary year and classes 1 and 2. Instruction is in the vernacular. The old selection exam at class 6 is being phased out to allow automatic progression to class 8. The bottom two years of the old secondary school system are being transformed into the top two years of primary.

**Efficiency gains include the following:**

- an elementary teacher force that is paid on an hourly basis and is considerably less costly than the primary teaching force;
- the introduction of a system of parent primary schools to elementary and smaller community feeder schools, thereby permitting the consolidation of class 3 and level 7;
- community responsibility for the establishment of the elementary school;
- space in primary school provided by dropping classes 1 and 2 and accepting classes 7 and 8;
- provision of education in classes 7 and 8 sometimes moving from a residential secondary to a day school primary.

Source: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. 2002i.

information on standard system performance indicators such as survival, retention, cost of service, and student learning is not collected or when collected is not analyzed, or when analyzed is not published and rarely used for policy making or public discussion of education issues. PIFS has recently begun to support the collection of key statistics related to the MDGs in collaboration with UNESCO, but much remains to be done. The paucity and inconsistency of data in general and in education in particular require serious effort to ensure accuracy in diagnosing issues and formulating strategies to address them (ADB 2004d, Attachment 1). An important objective of the PRIDE project is to improve the basis for planning and policy development through the collection and analysis of key statistical data.

***Promoting innovations in service delivery.*** There are important innovations in the provision of education that have been tested in countries around the world. Three may be of particular importance for PDMCs to consider: (i) school based management; (ii) multi-grade instructional strategies; and (iii) use of ICT in education.

Throughout the world, schools are expected to become increasingly self-managed and to make decisions regarding curriculum, budget and resource allocation, and staff and students. School-based management is expected to improve the quality of teaching and learning by locating decisions closer to the school, providing for sensitivity to local conditions, and allowing teachers to design education programs to meet local needs and to support improvement in learning (Abu-Duhou 1999). Key elements are the use of locally prepared school development plans as a basis for resource allocation, the provision of decentralized in-service training and support programs driven by teacher demand, and participatory approaches to program development. They all provide strong indications of the changes in the “mental models” of school improvement that are occurring in agencies, education ministries, and other stakeholders. Initiatives that enable schools—or communities—to assume powers related to school and educational decisions more broadly by providing financial resources to be managed at the school level and by strengthening the capacity of school board members and head teachers to manage these resources and account for them are almost certainly key elements of such a strategy.<sup>52</sup>

These kinds of innovation fit well with the tradition of widespread community participation in school governance in many PDMCs. Schools are often run by a school committee responsible for setting and collecting school fees and school maintenance, whereas government is responsible for providing teachers, for curriculum development, for maintenance of standards, and for provision of recurrent and capital grants. Community involvement and parental participation in the delivery of schooling has been found to be a key element of sustainable school improvement and enhanced student

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<sup>52</sup> It should be noted, however, that where the skill base is low, e.g., in rural areas, decentralizing school budgeting, curriculum, and resource allocation might not be successful, unless technical support is provided to help the weak schools strengthen their capacity to manage school improvement processes. In the absence of such support, inequities between schools may increase, as urban schools take advantage of the opportunities.

performance in many countries. This is particularly evident in private (including church-owned) schools where direct accountability to parents and supporting communities and the readiness to communicate with parents on student performance and the operational challenges the school faces contribute significantly to the active involvement of parents and to superior performance.<sup>53</sup> Experiences in PNG, Samoa, and Vanuatu suggest similar outcomes.

Multi-grade instruction holds considerable promise to improve efficiency and learning. At the same time, it could be used much more frequently and more effectively.<sup>54</sup> There is considerable international experience with multi-grade teaching in developed and developing countries. The evidence is clear. Multi-grade teaching can be effective—often even more effective than mono-grade instruction—when an adequate supply of well-designed instructional materials is available and teachers are trained in multi-grade techniques. Moreover, it usually has a highly positive effect on the demand for schooling and student attendance.<sup>55</sup> Multi-grade teaching is practiced in RMI, Samoa, Tonga, and several other PDMCs. Instead of deploring the practice as is common, efforts should be made to establish policies that create conditions for its effective use.

There is little doubt that ICT can help overcome some of the constraints of small size and isolation that PDMCs face. The potential of communication technology, including computer applications and remote transmission, in spreading educational opportunities to remote and dispersed populations is considerable. ICT can improve not only access through distance learning for remote populations, but also efficiency in delivering high-quality and relevant education. (See Box 6.) It is an important means of transmitting knowledge and information effectively and, by improving computer literacy, of increasing new work opportunities in the Pacific and overseas. However, most schools in the region are poorly equipped with ICT facilities, skilled teachers, and equipment. The number of computer

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<sup>53</sup> See for example, Lockheed and Verspoor 1991; Jimenez, Lockheed, and Wattanawaha 1988; Jimenez, Lockheed, Luna, and Paqueo 1991; and Jimenez and Sawada 1999.

<sup>54</sup> There is abundant literature on multi-grade instruction. See <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/multigrade/> for a bibliography.

<sup>55</sup> To reduce the high cost of small schools, Kiribati has attempted to consolidate students, teachers, and resources into fewer schools. This resulted in strong resistance from parents when the consolidated schools were far from their homes. A key challenge therefore is to develop cost-effective strategies for providing education to small, dispersed, and, often, disadvantaged populations.

Box 6

**Information and Communication Technology  
and Improved Education Outcomes**

Individuals learn in different ways. The traditional passive classroom scenario where the teacher lectures and the student reads and memorizes is not productive for some students. In the Pacific, where a prevailing oral tradition endures, learners become more and more frustrated and drop out of school. The use of multimedia which brings into play more of the senses can overcome some of those shortcomings with the right teaching approaches and good materials. Adding a degree of interactivity where learners receive immediate and appealing feedback for their efforts and are then guided through an interactive process to correct errors can provide an accelerated and highly motivating learning environment. The children and teachers who live and work on outer islands are physically isolated from the outside world, even from their capitals, and that contributes to inequitable education outcomes. In countries where providing training and education to dispersed outer island schools is difficult, technology can be a useful alternative. Yet, despite the potential, it is important to proceed carefully and to identify those applications that impact directly on instructional practice and student learning. Educational technologies have often been “oversold” by enthusiastic promoters and “underused” by poorly prepared teachers (Cuban 2001). The most promising applications are in higher education and upper-secondary education, in-service teacher education, and international school networks (e.g., World Links).<sup>56</sup> Collaboration with private sector specialists for maintenance, support, and instruction may help overcome start-up problems.

Source: ADB Staff.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.world-links.org>

users in the Pacific region compares unfavorably internationally. Where computers are available, they are few and arrangements for maintenance and software support pose difficulties. Programs in computer studies are limited. The underdevelopment of ICT facilities in PDMCs limits the pursuit of knowledge and will disadvantage students in the region at a time when the global flow of information is growing.

*Intensifying Regional Cooperation.* Small island countries cannot achieve economies of scale. Establishing centers for curriculum and textbook development or for pre-service teacher training, for example,

may prove expensive and impossible to sustain given their financial, technical, and management capacities. Alternative strategies are critically important. Regional organizations can often cater to the specific needs of different countries. SPBEA is addressing issues related to assessments while PRIDE can develop individualized curricula focusing more on country context, needs, and relevance. Another alternative is to use ICT to target outer island populations as is done in FSM and Fiji Islands. Distance education to provide pre-service and in-service training is well established in many developing countries. Small economies such as Cook Islands and Tuvalu can use ICT to improve the quality of their education services.

### **Improving Relevance and Responsiveness of Sector Development Processes**

In the Pacific as in other developing countries, external support has been provided largely in the form of project aid. In many cases, this approach has limited the overall impact on development especially where external aid represents a significant proportion of public spending and where a large number of external partners is involved. Investments have often been determined by agency priorities rather than by national needs, with considerable duplication and distortions of spending priorities. Many developing country governments—including those in PDMCs—are not equipped to effectively handle the burden of dealing with multiple agencies for project development, negotiation, and supervision, resulting in a lack of ownership and limited institutionalization even of demonstrably successful experiments. These problems are widely recognized by governments and their development partners. There is broad agreement that complementary and reinforcing interventions are likely to be more effective.

As an alternative to traditional project aid, the sector-wide approach (SWAp) has been used in several countries in Asia and Africa. It is designed to ensure government leadership in program design and implementation, alignment of government and partner objectives, coherence of financial support, and harmonization of procedures. The

approach is operationalized through several instruments: (i) explicitly agreed frameworks for partnership; (ii) comprehensive sector development plans; (iii) a medium-term expenditure framework; (iv) macro-economic links; and (v) clearly agreed strategies for strengthening management systems and implementation capacity. The main features are summarized in Box 7.

### Box 7

#### Features of the Sector-Wide Approach

##### Comprehensive Sector Development Program

- Sector wide in scope, covering all programs and projects
- Based on policy objectives for the sector and strategies to achieve them over the medium to long term
- A program of specific interventions and expenditure plans in the nearer term

##### Expenditure Framework

- Links with the macro framework and poverty reduction strategy for integration with the overall expenditure program
- Has an intrasectoral spending plan derived from program priorities

##### Country Ownership

- Government takes the lead, sets priorities, coordinates the donors, and consults broadly with local stakeholders

##### Donor Partnership

- Donors support the country in its role, and align their support to the same government program

##### Donor Harmonization

- Donors adopt common implementation and management structures, preferably those of the government

Source: World Bank 2001.