APPRAISAL REPORT
ON THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN 2015-2019
AND THE EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Commissioned by UNICEF on behalf of the
Department of Education of Papua New Guinea and the EDPaCC

Overall recommendation:
The endorsement of the National Education Plan (NEP) 2015-2019 is conditional upon addressing some changes and implementing some updates that have been proposed in the recommendations of this report, including the elaboration of an addendum to the current NEP.

Final Report, January 19, 2018

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Note: This report takes into consideration the comments made by the GPE Secretariat regarding the draft report.

Disclaimer: The information and views set out in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of UNICEF, the Department of Education, or the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 3

2. The Education Sector in Papua New Guinea: Background and Context 3

3. Methodology 5

4. Technical Appraisal: Analysis of the Criteria 5

4.1. Leadership and Participation 6

4.2. Soundness and Relevance 7

4.3. Equity, Efficiency, and Learning 11

4.4. Coherence 13

4.5. Feasibility, Implementability, and Monitorability 13

5. Conclusions 15

6. Recommendations 17

Annexes 19

1. Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, with more than 800 languages. Since its independence in 1975, PNG has struggled to sustain a continuous development process. With a per capita GDP of $2,613 (2014), PNG is classed as a lower middle-income country. It is ranked 154th out of 188 countries in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2016: 200). PNG's population numbers 7.9 million people, of which 88% live in rural areas. Forty percent of the population lives in poverty.[1] The annual population growth rate is 3.1%. The country is divided into 22 provinces, including the National Capital District (Port Moresby).

PNG has experienced increasing economic growth in recent years, with high and sustained GDP growth rates of above 5% for ten years.[2] Growth rates peaked in 2011 (10.7%) and 2014 (13.3%). When the National Education Plan (NEP) was written, the Government of PNG was expecting a growth rate of 15.5% in 2015. However, the actual economic growth rate for 2015 was 9.9%, and it plummeted to 2.6% in 2016.[3] This decrease was mainly because of the collapse of international resource prices. The country is currently in a state of fiscal crisis, and revenues have been shrinking in the last 3 years. PNG has paid for the lack of diversification in its economy, which is concentrated in agriculture and mining. Public financial management and more transparent and efficient public spending is still an unresolved question in PNG. In order to resolve the crisis, it is imperative for the government to balance the budget. Therefore, social services are experiencing significant reductions, and payments have been delayed (for instance, to teachers).

In 2016, PNG made a commitment to host the APEC Meeting in October 2018. During that period, the economy was still growing rapidly. The national government allocated K800 million (some $250 million) for the event,[4] resources that are currently unavailable unless severe cuts are carried out.

2. The Education Sector in Papua New Guinea: Background and Context

Papua New Guinea has a strong tradition of formulating education sector plans, which started immediately after independence with the Education Plan of 1976-1980. A major education reform was initiated in the mid-90's and then two separate National Education Plans were initiated for periods of 10 years each: 1995-2004 and 2005-2014. The new National Education Plan (NEP) was initiated for a period of 5 years (2015-2019), as planners took into account the fact that many changes can happened in a country in 10 years. Thus, they decided that it was wiser to plan for a period of 5 years. After the NEP was finalized, some changes were made at the highest political level, and the validation process took more than a year.

[1] https://www.adb.org/countries/papua-new-guinea/poverty
[2] http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/png/overview
[3] https://tradingeconomics.com/papua-new-guinea/gdp-growth-annual
[4] http://www.businessadvantagepng.com/why-hosting-apec-will-transform-papua-new-guinea/

All education subsectors are under the purview of the Department of Education. Only Higher Education, which is managed by the Department of Higher Education, is excluded. The Provinces play a very important role in the education sector, as they pay teacher salaries and leave fares. District and Local-Level Governments are relevant actors in the education sector as well.[5]

The main policy document guiding the education sector is the Education Act 1983 (amended in 1995 and under revision in 2017). The current education system has been in force since 1991. It prescribes 9 years of basic education for all children from 6 to 14 years of age i.e., 3 years of elementary education for 6-8 years old followed by 6 years of primary education and 4 years of Secondary education for 15 to 18-years old. Early-Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) are currently not included under the formal education system in PNG. There is a proposal to change the structure to a 1-6-6 system, which will include 1 year of ECCE, 6 years of Basic Education (2 years of Elementary Education and 4 years of Primary Education), and 6 years of Secondary Education.

Basic education is free under the law, and the Education Tuition Fee Free policy, implemented from 2012 onward,[6] is contributing toward achieving the goal of free education for all children by facilitating direct transfers to all schools that falls under the National Education System, except universities. Indirect costs are paid by parents and the DoE allows schools to charge parents up to K200 ($62) as "school project fees." However, the DoE states that "No student is to be refused enrolment or class attendance due to non-payment of project fees."[7]

Education remains one of the top priorities of the GoPNG, but the decrease in revenues has pushed the government to reduce allocations to education and other social services.

Papua New Guinea joined the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 2010, and it received one GPE grant of $19.2 million, managed by the World Bank, for the period 2011-2015. The components of the grant were:

1. Establishment of classroom libraries
2. Professional development for teachers
3. Introduction of a reading assessment tool (EGRA) to enable teachers to measure student progress

In order to access more GPE funds, the National Education Plan (NEP) must be endorsed by the Local Education Group in PNG. As a first step, an appraisal of the Plan must be conducted. This appraisal is part of the GPE Quality Assurance Review, and it is done by an independent consultant in order to assess, among other criteria, the soundness, relevance,

[5] The PNG Education system is highly decentralized: "The DoE is responsible for national education policy and planning, developing curriculum, maintaining standards, and facilitating teacher education training. The Teacher Service Commission primarily oversees teachers' salaries and conditions. The Provincial Education Divisions are responsible for the administration of elementary, primary, secondary, and vocational education. Local-level Government responsibilities include the establishment and operation of elementary schools." (Corporate Plan 2016-2018, 2016: 5).

[6] It has to be noted that the GoPNG tried to initiate free-education policies several times in the past. http://devpolicy.org/fourth-times-the-charm-a-brief-history-of-free-education-policies-in-png-20141209/

[7] Minister of Education's statement to Parliament. http://www.education.gov.pg/quicklinks/minister.html

feasibility, equity, and efficiency of the NEP. PNG is presently eligible for an additional allocation of $7.02 million. It is still uncertain who the Grant Agent will be.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the appraisal phase (independent assessment) is to assist education stakeholders in appraising the soundness, relevance, and coherence that lend credibility to an Education Sector Plan.

The methodology utilized to collect relevant information for the appraisal was as follows:

- **Desk Review**. This appraisal includes a review of the National Education Plan 2015-2019, the Education Situation Analysis, the Annual Operational Financial Plans, the Simulation Model, and other relevant documents related to the education sector in Papua New Guinea (see Annex 3).

- **Interviews with Authorities and Education Partners**. Interviews were conducted in Port Moresby from November 13 to 17. A list of the people interviewed can be found in Annex 2.

- **Analysis of the Education Sector Plan and Implementation Plan**. Analysis of the plans was conducted, employing the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal and the GPE Methodology Matrix. The Implementation Plan 2018-2019 was not available for appraisal, as the DoE had not elaborated it yet.

- **Presentation of Preliminary Findings.** The findings were presented to the National Department of Education and the Education Development Partners Advisory Coordination Committee (EDPaCC).

- **Elaboration of the Draft Appraisal Report.** The document was presented to the GPE Secretariat, the DoE, and education partners for their comments.

- **Presentation of the Final Appraisal Report and the GPE Methodology Matrix**.

However, this is not the usual type of appraisal. Usually, an Education Sector Plan is appraised in its last stage of preparation. By the time the Local Education Group decided to appraise the NEP, it had already been politically validated by the Government of PNG, printed, and implemented for a year.

4. Technical Appraisal: Analysis of the Criteria

This section will outline and examine the 5 criteria of the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal.

4.1. Leadership and Participation

Leadership and Ownership

According to the GPE/IIEP guidelines for plan preparation in the education sector, one of the features of a credible plan is that it must be guided by an overall vision. The National Education Plan 2015-2019 (NEP) does not explicitly include a vision and a mission (the Corporate Plan does[8]), but it is aligned with the document Vision 2050, a strategic PNG document, where the first pillar is "Human capital development, gender, youth, and people empowerment." Among others, it includes the following objectives: "Free and universal basic education for all school-age children from elementary 1 to grade 12," "One hundred percent literacy for the adult population over 15 years of age," "Expand all secondary schools proportionate to Universal Basic Education targets," and "Establish one vocational school in each district." The Plan also references the Medium-Term Development Plan 2011-2015, in which education is presented as a development priority.

The NEP 2015-2019 was elaborated in 2014 and 2015, and it therefore includes references to the Millennium Development Goals, specifically goal #2, which deals with education, not to the new Sustainable Development Goals.

The National Department of Education (NDoE) has shown leadership throughout the process of elaborating this NEP, and a strong attitude of ownership was expressed by all the informants. I could perceive a general sense of ownership in the DoE during my meetings with the personnel there.

The Education Development Partners Advisory Coordination Committee (EDPACC), the Local Donor Group, has been instrumental in this process. The main donors are UNICEF, DFAT (formerly AusAID), EU, JICA, and the World Bank. Some donors also contributed to the process through their advisors embedded in the DoE.

The DoE made a deliberate decision to have a short version so that it would be widely read and used. NEP was supposed then to be supplemented with a number of other documents, such as the Provincial Education Plans, District Education Plans, Corporate Plan, and Annual Operational Plans.

Participatory Process

The process of elaborating the NEP started around mid-2014 with the elaboration of the Education Sector Analysis by an independent consultant.

Several working/thematic groups on monitoring and evaluation, financing, teaching, and learning outcomes, etc., consisting of DoE staff and advisors/counsellors, (funded by donors and embedded in the DoE) were formed. Development partners, NGOs, and civil society

[8] The Corporate Plan 2016-2018 is a document written by the DoE as part of the NEP planning process. It includes the planning for the different divisions of the DoE.

members did not participate in these working groups. Participation by other ministries was also very limited.

There was a consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders, including community representatives and teachers at the national, provincial, and district level. Drafts were written in English, but there was facilitation in local languages. Informants at DoE agreed that the planning process was highly participatory and inclusive. However, several partners, including some donors and some civil society representatives, have expressed the opinion that there was a lack of inclusiveness in the process, which was led and controlled by the NDoE.

The discussions showed that there was a lack of good coordination among PNG education stakeholders. The Local Education Group (called ESIP-Education Sector Implementation Program) meets only 2-3 times a year. NGOs like Save the Children and World Vision are not invited to participate in the LEG, and local NGOs complain that the DoE does not listen to them. No Mid-Term Review or Joint Sector Review has been conducted in the last few years. Nevertheless, no risk associated with lack of coordination between DoE and partners has been identified in the NEP.

Capacity Development

Several donor-funded advisors participated in the elaboration of the NEP by providing technical inputs and facilitating some discussions with the DoE teams. The role of the technical support was instrumental, and the NEP always retained the leadership role. Informants agreed that the process helped to increase local capacities at the DoE.

An individual consultant elaborated the ESA on behalf of the DoE. No consultant was hired to support the elaboration of NEP.

4.2. Soundness and Relevance

Evidence-based Education Sector Analysis

Before starting the elaboration of the NEP, the DoE commissioned a consultant to conduct an Education Sector Analysis. The document that was produced as a result expresses the opinions of this consultant; it was not endorsed by the DoE. The ESA did not include data on ECCE or Higher Education. This ESA was not shared with most education stakeholders, and it is not even mentioned in the NEP. The ESA was conducted in 2014, and, therefore, is more than three-years old. The last year provided for most of the indicators is 2012. Some of the figures are from 2013, and some are from 2010. It includes a good amount of data on access and internal efficiency indicators, but data on equity and quality is scarce. There are inaccuracies in the calculations of percentages, and the document does not include much analysis in general. In most instances, the author does not explain the reasons behind the increase or decrease in education indicators. For instance, on page 81, it is said that the

transition rate for grade 8 to grade 9 has decreased, but the reasons for this decrease are not explained. This is also the case for many other indicators in the document.

The NEP does not cover the entire education sector, as higher education is managed by a different Department. Early Childhood Care and Education is not included in the formal education sector and barely mentioned in the NEP.

Some analysis and thematic studies conducted by education partners, including a Gender Audit Report, the PILNA 2013, a study on children's and women's rights in PNG, the READ PNG Completion Report, and others, were provided for the elaboration of this appraisal. Please see annex 3 for more information on these studies. No vulnerability analysis has been conducted.

Relevance of Policies and Programs

Papua New Guinea has a consolidated tradition of formulating education sector plans. In recent times, two 10-year NEPs were elaborated before the one appraised here. That is why it is surprising to see that no standards or guidelines were followed—a fact confirmed by a First Assistant Secretary.

The NEP is organized in the context of 6 focus areas,[9] with the corresponding outputs and outcomes provided. According to the NEP (page 10), "for each focus area, there are clear strategies that will be turned into activities in the operational plans to be written by the Department of Education and other education partners around the country." However, these strategies were not concretized in the operational plans.

A casual chain is explicitly presented as a "logical framework" on page 36, with the 6 focus areas and the corresponding outputs and outcomes. At first sight, this casual chain seems coherent. However, when we analyzed the 64 strategies and the corresponding activities in detail, we found some inconsistencies.

1. In the section on access and equity:
    a. The text exhorts readers to "Address issues affecting most-vulnerable children." However, the NEP does not include any detailed analysis about those children or any vulnerability analysis.
    b. The section on school fees mentions the Tuition Fee Free policy, but it does not mention the indirect costs, not covered by that policy, which can be a serious barrier to education in a country where 88% of the population lives in rural areas and 40% lives in poverty.
    c. The proposed strategies to attract out-of-school children to school are quite vague, including a recommendation to "implement strategies, including use of technology," which does not provide any value added information or content to improve the existing inequities in access to education.

[9] The six focus areas are Access and equity, Teachers and teaching, Learning, Alternate pathways, Local management, and System strengthening (NEP, page 36).

d. It is remarkable that this focus area includes a reference to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

2. Teachers and Training:
    a. The shift to a Standards-Based Curriculum in elementary, primary, and secondary education can be a step forward in the enhancement of teaching and learning. However, it is important to include a training plan for teachers in the NEP. Some respondents in PNG mentioned that the Outcome Based Education failed because of the lack of adequate training and teaching materials.
    b. Despite a reference in the introduction to the importance of the living conditions and compensation of teachers, the two outputs and the seven strategies associated with this area only focus on the professional aspects. They exclude important aspects such as motivation, living conditions in remote areas, promotion of female teachers, or even housing (mentioned in the introductory text of the area[10] but without an associated activity).

3. Learning: please see page 12 of this report for more information on this focus area.

4. Alternate pathways:
    a. This area focuses on TVET and distance learning.
    b. There is no mention of accelerated education programs for youth who have dropped out of school prematurely, despite such programs being successful globally, especially in regions like West Africa.
    c. Five out of the 11 strategies have no associated activities. Some of them are as complex as strategy #38, which reads: "Ensure that post-secondary TVET provides access to industry and sector-based applied education for adults."

5. Local Management.
    a. The strategies in this area focus on the role of principals or head teachers, but they also involve School Management Boards (SMB) and School Learning Improvement Plans.
    b. Teachers are included through the SMB.
    c. There is a remarkable reference to the importance of focusing on women when training leaders.
    d. It seems ambitious to set most of the targets at 100%.

6. System Strengthening:
    a. This is a very comprehensive focus area, which includes communication and information systems, planning and coordination, financial management, and human resources.
    b. The first strategy proposes the use of ICTs to improve communication and access to information. However, the World Bank estimated in 2014 that only

[10] It is interesting to note that there is an indicator on page 58 saying, "Percentage of teachers provided with housing." However, there are no strategies or activities to improve this important aspect of teachers' living conditions. Nevertheless, some activities related to these topics are included in the section dealing with system strengthening (for instance, strategy 61 on page 51).

20.3% of the PNG population has access to electricity.[11] The Asian Development Bank estimated in 2016 that only 12% of the population is connected to the electricity grid.[12] Moreover, the NEP does not include any mention of increasing access to electricity through, for instance, solar panels.

c. Capacity building seems to be a priority of the NDoE, but no capacity development plan is included in the NEP. Moreover, the NDoE continues to rely heavily on donor agencies to fund these activities, though such funding is always uncertain.
d. There is no information about coordination with provinces and districts. This is probably a reflection of their high level of autonomy and some existing political tensions.

Moreover, the column on "deliverables" is confusing, as it combines existing and to-be-created documents, with some of the deliverables looking more like goals to achieve (e.g., "Elementary schools using quality curriculum and standards," which is strategy #29 on page 44). Moreover, 12 out of the 64 strategies have no associated activities. Considering that this NEP has no associated operational/action plan, this is a concerning gap.

The content of the NEP is informed by the available details, which are taken from the EMIS 2015. It contains no information from the ESA and does not even mention it. The evidence is therefore sometimes scarce (e.g., on quality). An important element related to this weakness in the evidence-based analysis is that, as far as we know, no analysis was conducted on the previous NEP, and no associated lessons were derived.

Soundness of the Financial Framework

The analysis of the financial framework was difficult, as the information is scattered across different documents from different Ministries (Departments). The DoE is in charge of a fraction of the education budget, which also includes the payment of teachers' salaries and direct transfers to the Provinces and Districts. The interviewed DoE staff did not seem familiar with the overall education budget.

The Simulation Model (SM) is a comprehensive document elaborated in Excel, with multiple sheets that include all the sub-sectors of the NEP (therefore, higher education and ECCE are not included). It is based on a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. It does not include macro-economic projections. Projections for enrolment and human and physical resources are included. However, the financial projections were made in 2014 in a context of important economic growth, and, therefore, those figures are not valid anymore. The SM does not take into account the different scenarios that could affect the education sector during the course of the five years of the NEP.

Despite being based in the SM, the financial framework is the weakest part of the NEP. The information it contains is very poor, and it does not include, for instance, any reference to capital and recurrent costs, unit costs, or the share of the national budget allocated to

[11] https://tradingeconomics.com/papua-new-guinea/access-to-electricity-percent-of-population-wb-data.html
[12] https://www.adb.org/news/adb-supports-png-increase-access-electricity-rural-areas

education. However, some of this information is available in the SM. Once again, the aim to keep the plan short and concise precludes the inclusion of information needed for a sound and credible education sector plan.

The NEP mentions that a baseline for collecting the reference values for the different indicators will be elaborated in 2015. However, the baseline documents received from the DoE lack information for a number of indicators (e.g., those related to water and sanitation facilities, to out-of-school children, to school spending on Tuition Fee Free policy (TFF), etc.).

Soundness of the Action Plan

The NEP does not contain an explicit Action Plan. The Annual Operational Financial Plan (AOFP) is a financial document, not a planning one. It includes the expected budgets for each division of the DoE, and it is not aligned with the NEP. The plans were created for 2015, 2016, and 2017. The Terms of Reference for this consultancy included the analysis of the Implementation Plan 2018-2019, but this document was not even drafted at that time.

4.3. Equity, Efficiency, and Learning

Robustness and Relevance of the Strategies

Equity is confined to special needs in the plan, with some reference to gender as well. Marginalized groups include "girls, children with disabilities, those in remote villages, and the very poor." However, there is no analysis of these groups, and no vulnerability analysis is included in the ESA or in the NEP. Both documents fail to provide specific strategies for these groups.

Despite the fact that the NEP states, "Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue reflected across the entire plan and its implementation" (page 31) and the inclusion of a solid "Gender Audit Report," the gender approach of the NEP is weak, and it does not include many elements beyond some indicators that are disaggregated by sex. A stronger gender approach could include, among other elements, 1) the identification of specific problems, barriers, and challenges for boys and girls, 2) specific strategies and actions for boys and girls, 3) a differentiated approach to male and female teachers/DoE staff, 4) a gender-sensitive analysis of teaching and learning materials, and 5) propose specific actions to reduce gender-based violence.

Regarding geographical disparities, the NEP does not include any information, although relevant information is available in the education statistics.

Regarding efficiency, out of the three main dimensions (repetition, drop out, and transition), only transition is analyzed in the NEP. The low transition levels from grade 8 to grade 9 (around 50% for girls and 60% for boys) are attributed to, among other causes, the remoteness of communities, the lack of resources, or the lack of teachers. The Education Statistics only compile information on enrolment and teachers and do not include any reference to any of these three dimensions. Overall, the analysis on these three dimensions

is very weak, with insufficient data and a lack of detailed causal explanations (except the ones pointed out above).

Regarding learning outcomes, "Quality learning for all" is the subtitle of the NEP 2015-2019. Learning is one of the above-mentioned 6 focus areas of the Plan, and it includes important aspects such as the need to have a relevant curriculum,[13] the importance of having a positive learning environment, and adequate teaching and learning materials. However, causal explanations about the poor quality of education are scarce. Moreover, it is aspirational with regard to some issues. For instance, it states "schools will become safe areas free from gender-based violence and bullying." However, it does not contain a single strategy or activity to achieve this goal in actuality. Moreover, there are no references to the importance of pedagogical methodologies in improving learning (beyond references to the new approach based on competencies mentioned in the focus area on teachers and teaching (pages 40-41).

Change Strategies

As mentioned above, the causal chain is presented as a coherent and simplified logical framework on page 36. The planned interventions and activities could help to improve efficiency and learning, as some significant aspects, including the improvement in the working conditions of teachers, the qualifications of teachers, the reform of the curriculum, the improvement of physical conditions in schools (e.g. water and sanitation), and others, are taken into account. I think the planned interventions and activities will have a limited impact on equity, as the starting point, the diagnostic stage, is deficient and so are the proposed interventions.

Regarding innovative ways to address key issues related to equity, efficiency, and learning, there is a section on e-learning, which includes the development of an e-learning policy, programs and resources, training of teachers, etc. However, I am skeptical about the reach of this program, as only 20% of the population in PNG has access to electricity, and solar panels are not mentioned in the NEP.

Results Framework

There is no results framework for this NEP. Only an M&E Framework (which could be considered as a part of a Results Framework) is included. The M&E Framework is quite well constructed. Indicators are well defined, despite being linked to a baseline that did not exist at the time of elaborating the NEP.[14] It includes targets for 2019. However, other important elements associated with a good Results Framework, such as the objectives, strategies, frequency of data collection, responsibility for data collection, and assumptions, are absent.

[13] PNG is going through a transition period, moving from an Outcome Based Education to a Standard Based Education.

[14] The DoE planned a baseline to be conducted in 2015 (after the NEP was finalized). The baseline was conducted but it did not include all the indicators of the NEP, and therefore several indicators do not have a reference value that can be used in the monitoring process.

4.4. Coherence

Coherence among Strategies, Programs, and Interventions

The outputs, outcomes, strategies, and activities are well structured and aligned with the available empirical evidence. Often the information provided on the activities is very succinct, and the presentation of the strategies and activities is not very concrete. Moreover, as mentioned above, the NEP does not include any action plan. Therefore, despite coherence in the outputs/outcomes and strategies and activities, it is sometimes difficult to see the links between the planned inputs and the expected impacts over the medium term.

Comprehensive Costing Aligned with the Budget

The costs include all the sub-sectors except ECCE and Higher Education. However, it is difficult to estimate if they are consistent with the proposed strategies, activities, and targets because no detailed activity-based budget is presented in any of the documents.

4.5. Feasibility, Implementability, and Monitorability

Financial Feasibility

As mentioned above, the financing projections were made when the PNG economy was thriving. The recent low growth rates and the consequent financial crisis forced the GoPNG to make significant reductions in the education budget.[15] Therefore, these projections are not valid anymore.

The funding gap seems large in absolute terms (some $275 million), but in proportion to the education budget, it represents only 4%. However, the actual education budgets for 2015 and 2016 have been lower than expected, and as the economy will likely stagnate for another 2 or 3 years, the revenues could be lower than expected. As a result, the gap can be expected to grow.

Development partners have expressed their willingness extend their support to the priorities of the NEP. According to the information provided in the simulation model, Australia is contributing some 80% of the external funds expected for the period 2015-2019.

System Capacity

[15] According to the First Assistance Secretary of the Finances Division, the reduction in the DoE's budget was 30% in 2015 and 48% in 2016.

Several informants, including DoE staff, recognized the gaps in terms of the capacity of the DoE and, especially, in the provinces. No capacity assessment had been conducted prior to the commencement of the NEP, but capacity building appears like a crosscutting issue throughout the NEP. A detailed capacity building budget is included in the simulation model.

The DoE organigram is clear, but the high number of senior levels is surprising. For instance, above a Director there are 3 hierarchical levels before one reaches the Minister of Education.

The allocation of resources to decentralized levels is not clearly articulated, likely because those funds go directly from the Treasury to the provinces and districts without passing through the DoE.

The NEP makes it clear that parents and local communities can play important roles, but civil society organizations are not even mentioned in the document. As mentioned above, the Local Education Group is, at present, a dysfunctional body that lacks the coordination that the implementation of the NEP requires. Thus, the LEG should be reactivated as a forum where partners can voice issues and provide inputs on NEP implementation.

Governance and Accountability

The NEP does not include a communication strategy to disseminate its contents and to engage stakeholders. As an exercise in educational devolution, and taking advantage of this appraisal process, workshops could be organized with each province/district to explain the NEP and to discuss the involvement of the different stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the activities and interventions proposed in the plan. A summary of the NEP could be translated into local languages.

Mechanisms to increase accountability and transparency are not mentioned in the NEP. Regarding the TFF policy, the expected budget is stable at some $200 million per year, and despite its responsibility in monitoring the use of the funds, as these are directly transferred to the schools, the NEP does not include any relevant details.

Gender imbalance in educational management has also not been identified.

Risks to Implementation and the Mitigation of Risks

The NEP includes the risks, but, once again, in a very succinct way. The risks are identified for each output but not the mitigation measures. The lack of capacities at the DoE and at decentralized levels is not considered a risk. A potential economic crisis has not been considered either.

Robustness of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

It is always important for the Education authorities, and donors, to be able to track the progress of the plan implementation. The M&E Framework is well structured, and it encompasses all necessary information, such as sources of verification, personnel

responsible for collection and processing of data, the frequency of collection, and the reporting line. The indicators are aligned with the strategies, outputs, and outcomes proposed in the NEP.

The LEG is not included in the M&E Framework. No Annual Joint Education Sector Reviews were held in the last few years, and the NEP does not mention the possibility of introducing one. If such reviews were included, they could provide the DoE and all the education actors with a valuable opportunity to jointly analyze the progress of the education sector and take appropriate measures to get back on the right track if needed. Those reviews would be useful to assess and readjust strategies, activities, and, especially, the targets.

5. Conclusions

This appraisal is unusual, in that the National Education Plan 2015-2019 was finalized almost two years ago and validated and printed one year ago. Therefore, this late assessment is done exclusively for the purpose of endorsing it to the GPE.

The main **strengths of the Plan** are:

- The NEP is linked to strategic documents such as Vision 2050 and National Development Plans.
- Strong tradition of education planning.
- Good institutional framework.
- Political will (nuanced in the context of the crisis).
- Document is well structured.
- Focus on quality (needed in PNG).
- Capacity building is a crosscutting issue at all levels.
- Risks are included.

Some **areas of improvement** are:

- It is not a comprehensive Plan, as it does not include Higher Education and ECCE.
- The information contained in the NEP lacks explanatory details or much depth of information.
- The situation analysis is outdated, incomplete, and contains poor information on access and equity with almost none on quality.
- The participation of some stakeholders in the elaboration of the NEP was limited.
- The strategies and activities contain some inconsistencies.
- There are significant delays in the implementation of the milestones fixed by the NEP; only 6 out of 22 Provincial Education Plans were validated, the Education Act Review has not yet been approved, and there is no Infrastructure Plan or OOSC Survey. The National Curriculum Standards Framework focuses only on Elementary education.
- The different documents connected to the NEP have different dates, which can create some confusion. For instance, among the analyzed documents, the Corporate Plan was prepared for the period 2016-2018, and the Milne Bay Provincial Education Plan was prepared for the period 2016-2020.

- The costing/financing framework is incomplete and includes out of date financing projections.
- Available Implementation Plans only focus on finances and do not correspond to the NEP activities. The Implementation Plan 2018-2021 has not been prepared yet.
- Gender is not mainstreamed (just a declaration).
- Mitigation measures for the risks are not identified.

6. Recommendations

Overall recommendation:
The endorsement of the National Education Plan (NEP) 2015-2019 is conditional upon addressing some changes and implementing some updates that have been proposed in the recommendations of this report, including the elaboration of an addendum to the current NEP.

Given that the National Education Plan (NEP) is a document that has been validated and officially printed, the recommendations below could be included in an addendum to the NEP.

Main recommendations:

1. The **planning framework should be aligned with the financing framework**. It is strongly recommended that policy makers elaborate Annual Implementation Plans, while ensuring the inclusion of all associated strategies and activities and a calendar and budget for each.

2. It is strongly recommended to include a **comprehensive costing/financing framework**:
    a. Funding projections ought to be updated.
    b. It is recommended to consider scenarios for the period 2017-2019.
    c. As the actual education budgets are lower than planned, the funding gap should be recalculated.
    d. In order to improve the effectiveness of the education sector, the DoE should handle all the information related to education budgets (they are now scattered across several documents, as some transfers are made directly from the Treasury to the provinces and districts).
    e. The share of the national budget allocated to education should be calculated, and this percentage should be made explicit in the official education documents.
    f. The proportion of recurrent and capital expenditures should be included.
    g. The Simulation Model should include values for 2019 in all the sheets (the finance assumptions and revenue data currently do not include information for 2019).
    h. The funding gap is not proportionally large, but donors will not be able to bridge it. The DoE should elaborate a plan to look for alternative sources of funding.
    i. Include the information of the actual budgets in 2015 and 2016 (if available).

3. Set up **new dates for the elaboration of relevant documents**, such as OOSC survey, Provincial Education Plans, District Education Plans, Infrastructure Plan, National Curriculum Standards Framework (for all education levels) etc.

4. The Plan, elaborated in 2014-2015, makes references to MDG and the EFA, so it would be advisable to update this information to mention the **Agenda 2030** and the targets and indicators of SDGs; in particular, #4 referred to education.

5. The addendum should include **ECCE** as a sub-sector of formal education. ECCE should be included in the focus areas, the strategies, outputs, outcomes, and financial framework.

6. Regarding **equity, efficiency, and learning**:

    a. Equity: More data regarding geographic disparities and detailed analyses of the most vulnerable groups should be included in the addendum.
    b. The key challenges and underlying causes of efficiency and learning should be analyzed in detail, providing evidence based on the most recent set of data.

7. Regarding **Monitoring and Evaluation** in the NEP:

    a. A stronger baseline is needed, as the data currently collected do not include all the variables of the NEP.

    b. Regarding the EMIS:
        i. It is necessary to ensure that the collection of data will disaggregate indicators not only based on gender but also other variables such as province and inclusion factors.
        ii. It is recommended that policy makers progressively incorporate qualitative indicators on EMIS.
        iii. Most of the figures on the ESA are from 2012. More of the recent data, which are available according to the NDoE, should be included.

    c. It is strongly recommended to hold an Annual Joint Education Sector Review. It would be a good opportunity to conduct a stocktaking of the education sector and to improve coordination between education stakeholders.

8. It is important to set the **risks in a matrix**, which is grouped by theme, and add mitigation measures for each of them. It would also be interesting to add the likelihood (low/medium/high) and potential impact (low/medium/high) for each risk.

9. The **NEP should be disseminated** among all stakeholders, including at the district and community levels. The publication of a summary in national languages may be useful.

Moreover, the following recommendations are proposed for the next planning cycle:

1. The next National Education Plan should be a **full-sector plan** that includes ECCE and Higher Education. The discussions for potential changes in the location of TVET and Teacher Training could be a good opportunity to start a discussion with the National Department of Higher Education.

2. It would be desirable to follow some of the internationally recognized **methodologies** to elaborate the Education Sector Analysis and the National Education Plan; for instance, such methodologies can be used to elaborate the guidelines proposed by GPE/IIEP "Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines"—volume 1[16] and volume 2[17] and the Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation.[18]

3. An Education Sector Analysis, based on the most updated data, ought to be conducted before starting discussions on strategic elements of the National Plan. The ESA should be conducted in a collaborative way by education authorities and other education stakeholders.

4. The next planning cycle should be **more participatory and inclusive**, allowing the full participation of all education stakeholders.

5. A **Result Framework** with a table that compiles all the interventions organized by themes in the same way that they appear in the NEP should be included.

6. An **Action Plan**, which describes all the activities in detail and links each of them with the calendar and the budget, ought to be included.

7. It is recommended to include **more information** in some sections of the next NEP, for instance, on the situation analysis, the risks, the cost calculation/financing framework, and the description of activities.

8. It is recommended to include a **vulnerability analysis** of the education system and the different population groups.

9. Despite the existence of Provincial Education Plans, it is recommended to include a **summary of the geographical disparities** in the next NEP.

10. **Further research** is recommended to understand the functioning of the **TFF policy**.

11. **Gender** should be mainstreamed in the next NEP.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations.

[16] https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodological-guidelines-education-sector-analysis-volume-1
[17] https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodological-guidelines-education-sector-analysis-volume-2
[18] https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation

- Annex 2: List of People Interviewed.
- Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed.
- Annex 4: Response to comments provided by the GPE Secretariat.

Annex 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations

AOFP	Annual Operational Financial Plan
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
DoE	Department of Education
ECCE	Early-Childhood Care and Education
EDPaCC	Education Development Partners Advisory Coordination Committee
EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
LEG	Local Education Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NDoE	National Department of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PEAN	Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network
PILNA	Papua New Guinea Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TFF	Tuition Fee Free
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Annex 2: List of People Interviewed

Organization	Name	Position
Department of Education	Dr. Uke Kombra	Secretary for Education
	Walipe Wingi	Deputy Secretary (Teaching and Education Standards) and Focal Point for GPE
	James Agigo	Research, Evaluation and Statistics Division, Assistant Secretary
	Sabati Mero	Policy and Planning Division, Acting Assistant Secretary
	Oscar Onam	Policy and Planning Division, EMIS Advisor
	Camilus Kanau	Finances Division, First Assistance Secretary
	Jim Kerwin	Finances Division, Advisor
Department of Finance	Stephen Nukuitu	Deputy Secretary/Acting Secretary
Department of Planning and Monitoring	Loia Vara	Foreign Aid Division, Acting First Assistant Secretary
UNICEF	Karen Allen	Country Representative a.i.
	Ruby Noble	Chief of Education
DFAT (Australia)	Suzanne Edgecombe	Counsellor
	Peter Eloni	Advisor
	Janelle Denton	First Secretary, Education
World Bank	Andrew Cooper	Senior Operations Officer
	Myrna Machuca-Sierra	Education Advisor
JICA	Ippei Shimizu	Education Advisor
	Yoshihiko Chujo	Senior Representative
Save the Children	Luke Ebbs	Program Implementation Director (Acting)
Consultant	Priscilla Kare	Member of the National Education Board Former Executive Director of PEAN/National Coalition

Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed

- **Government of Papua New Guinea**
  - Constitution of Papua New Guinea, 1975
  - Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, National Strategic Task Force, 2011.
  - Budget Appropriation 2017
  - Financial Budget Outcome, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
  - Department of National Planning and Monitoring, Medium Term Development Plan 2 (2016-2017)
  - National Education Act 2017 (draft)
  - Education Act 1984 (Amendment 1995)

- **Department of Education**
  - National Education Plan 2015-2019, 2015
  - Universal Basic Education Plan 2010-2019, National Executive Council, June 2010
  - Universal Basic Education Plan 2010-2019, A guide to implementation 2010-2019, 2012
  - Education Sector Strategic Plan 2011-2030. A roadmap to the future, 2012
  - Corporate Plan 2016-2018, 2016
  - Milne Bay Provincial Education Plan 2016-2020
  - Baseline 2015
  - Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, 2015
  - Education Tuition Free Fee Policy, 2015
  - PNG Education at a Glance 2015 and 2016
  - Education Statistics, 2014, 2015, 2016
  - Papua New Guinea EFA 2015 Review, October 2014
  - National Education Plan 2005-2014
  - National Department of Education, Gender Audit Report, 22 June 2015
  - National Department of Education, The Papua New Guinea Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA), Report, July 2013
  - Gender Equity in Education Policy. Guidelines for Implementation, 2005

- **Global Partnership for Education**
  - Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation, 2015
  - Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal, 2015
  - Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Improving Learning and Equity through stronger education systems, 2015
  - Country-level process guide: a step-by-step guide to GPE membership, grant procedures, and education sector coordination, 2015
  - Equity and Inclusion in Education: A Guide to Support Education Sector Plan Preparation, Revision, and Appraisal, 2010

- **Other sources**

- Kukari, A (2014), Situational Analysis of Education in Papua New Guinea, Department of Education
- Marcio A. Carvalho (2016), Situation Analysis of Children's and Women's Rights in Papua New Guinea, October
- National Research Institute (2015), Universal Basic Education, Research Framework 2016-2020, Port Moresby, December
- The World Bank (2016), Implementation Completion and Results Report, READ PNG Project, June 27
- The World Bank (2009), Teacher management and utilization in Papua New Guinea: a review of policy and practice. By Paul Bennell, Peter Buckland and Aidan Mulkeen, May