



MEDIA RELEASE

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Key indicators for basic education must be improved

There are several measures (indicators) often used in the evaluation of the performance of basic education and for making informed decisions. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), the key indicators often used are the following:

- Access Rate, which is defined as the number of children enrolled at elementary Prep at the age of six years in relation to the total school-age population of the same age group;
- Retention Rate, which is defined as children who enter elementary Prep and continue on to complete the elementary and primary school in relation to the number who first started the elementary Prep; and
- Quality of Education based on a pupil's level of literacy and numeracy. Pupils' performance in Grade 8 National Examination is often used as a proxy for quality of education.

The National Research Institute (NRI) Spotlight Volume 15, Issue 14: **A snapshot of three key indicators for universal basic education in Papua New Guinea: What have we learnt?** authored by PNG NRI Researchers Dr Kilala Devette-Chee and Mr Peter Magury, provides highlights on the assessment of basic education in all provinces of PNG using access rate, retention rate and quality of education in 2015 and 2019.

Lessons that can be drawn from the assessment of basic education in 2015 and 2019 include the following:

- There has been a dramatic increase in access rate. However, there is also an increase in the enrolment of overage and underage children.
- Retention rate decreased, which indicates that the number of pupils that are dropping out of school before completing basic education has increased.
- On average, pupils' performance in the Grade 8 National Examination has increased marginally, which means that the quality of learning in basic education has gradually improved. However, the quality is still below the national standard.

If the intention is to improve basic education in PNG the following should be considered:

- Create more awareness, particularly in rural areas on the need for enrolment of children in school at the correct age.
- Conduct research to find the reasons why pupils often dropout of school and provide better interventions to address the problem.
- Provide adequate facilities and more qualified teachers to make school environment more conducive for learning.

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