



# SABER IN ACTION

## PACIFIC ISLANDS

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The World Bank Group's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) initiative produces data on education system policies and institutions, analyzes and evaluates their quality, and provides decision makers and stakeholders with an assessment that fosters structured and informed policy dialogue on how to most effectively strengthen education systems. During its tenure, SABER has grown rapidly to become a key component in the design of education programming across the globe, providing countries with quality data and information. By generating a broader knowledge base on education systems worldwide, these tools are helping reform education at the country level while also building a high-quality knowledge base for education reforms at the global level.

## SABER Engagements in the Pacific

Over the past several years, SABER has convened country workshops, conducted research, and produced reports assessing education systems in the Pacific Islands. SABER analyses in the Pacific span several domains, including Early Childhood Development (ECD), Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), School Autonomy and Accountability (SAA), Student Assessment (SA), Teachers, and Workforce Development (WfD).

Three countries—Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Solomon Islands—benefitted from multiple SABER analyses. Between 2013 and 2016, at the countries' request, SABER and the Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results (PaBER)—funded by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)—assessed Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Solomon Islands' education systems. SABER domains engaged these countries sequentially. Each engagement involved extensive research, workshops, and related policy discussions. During the engagements, mid-level government workers met with counterparts in other Pacific Island countries to discuss findings — an effort that proved especially successful because they were able to learn from each other and also because they demonstrated significant buy-in, perhaps due to their critical roles in ensuring policy implementation.



Country	SABER Engagement(s)
Kiribati	ECD
Papua New Guinea	EMIS, SA, SAA, Teachers
Samoa	ECD, EMIS, SA, SAA, Teachers
Solomon Islands	ECD, EMIS, SA, SAA, Teachers, WfD
Timor-Leste	WfD
Tonga	ECD
Tuvalu	ECD
Vanuatu	ECD

## Workshops Supported Regional Learning

Although Pacific Island countries have distinct cultures, contexts, histories, geographies, and levels of development, many face similar challenges in education. Bringing together government workers from multiple countries has offered each an opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another. Workshops proved useful for comparing challenges and potential solutions. Multi-country workshops in the region about pre-school enrollment, for example, led participants to realize that they could resolve many of their countries' constraints to early childhood education.

SABER country reports, while country-specific in nature, also benefit the region as a whole. A country less developed in teacher training, for example, can learn from neighboring countries' successes in this area. Moreover, countries in the region outside of the core contingent of Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands may also benefit from these analyses and policy recommendations.

Between February and March 2016 nearly 150 key education stakeholders, including: policymakers, academics and researchers, specifically SABER Technical Teams; DFAT Staff; relevant World Bank Group education researchers and regional staff; the United Kingdom's Department for International Development education research staff; United Nations agencies; and academics and researchers from the disciplines of both education and systems thinking traveled to Sydney, Australia for the delivery of and participation in the Making Systems Work:



A *Global Conference on Education Systems* in partnership with DFAT. The three-day conference focused specifically on making complex education systems work in order to achieve better results and more learning. Participants heard from several speakers on the importance of and innovations in education systems and systems research, participated in group discussions, and were provided with numerous opportunities to hear about the various lessons learned. Participants included representation from 22 country delegations, including several from the Pacific Islands: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.



## Strategy and Policy Outcomes

SABER engagements in the Pacific Islands are yielding specific strategic and policy outcomes. Policy dialogue is ongoing, as a component of PaBER. To date, specific outcomes include the following:

- Solomon Islands policymakers are using **SABER-EMIS** findings to create a National Education Action Plan. Soon after SABER-EMIS completed its report on the Solomon Islands, the government held workshops to discuss the report and its recommendations. Donors are also utilizing the report and its findings. The Asian Development Bank is using SABER-EMIS recommendations for their project on Information and Communication Technologies for Better Education Results, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community is using them to enhance capacity building and data collection.



- Also in the Solomon Islands, **SABER-WfD** analyses laid the groundwork for the creation of a National Human Resources Development and Training Plan (NHRDTP). Diverse stakeholders met to review SABER-WfD's findings, consider policy options, and set education priorities. These education priorities structured the NHRDTP.
- In addition, **SABER-SAA** policy analyses in Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Solomon Islands stimulated dialogue amongst policy makers. Recommendations from the SABER-SAA analyses have informed the countries' Education Sector Strategy Updates.



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