

Promoting Effective Public Expenditure Project (PEPE)

PNG's Lost Decade in Education?: Evaluating progress in PNG's primary schools between 2002 and 2012

Grant Walton; Development Policy Centre, ANU

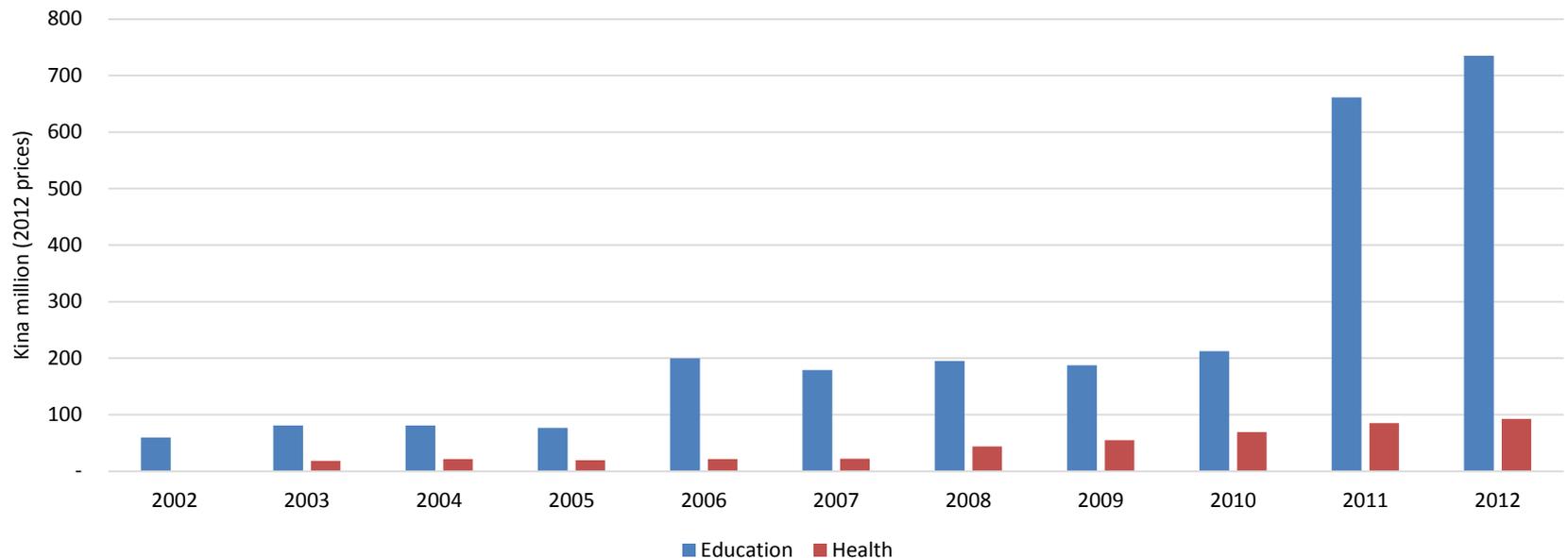


There have been significant changes over the past 10 years in the education sector in PNG, including:

- Changes to funding mechanisms:
 - School subsidies for free education
 - Direct financing
 - DSIP (MP controlled payments), as well as SIP
 - Function grants
- Revenue has increased

Financing for education is in marked contrast to health

Central government funding for health facilities and school operational costs (Kina million, 2012 prices)



More evidence is required to evaluate whether this funding has made a difference for service delivery in PNG.

Methodology

Surveys of primary schools and health facilities: 2002 to 2012

The PEPE Survey builds on from the Public Expenditure and Service Delivery (PESD) Survey conducted by NRI / World Bank in 2002.

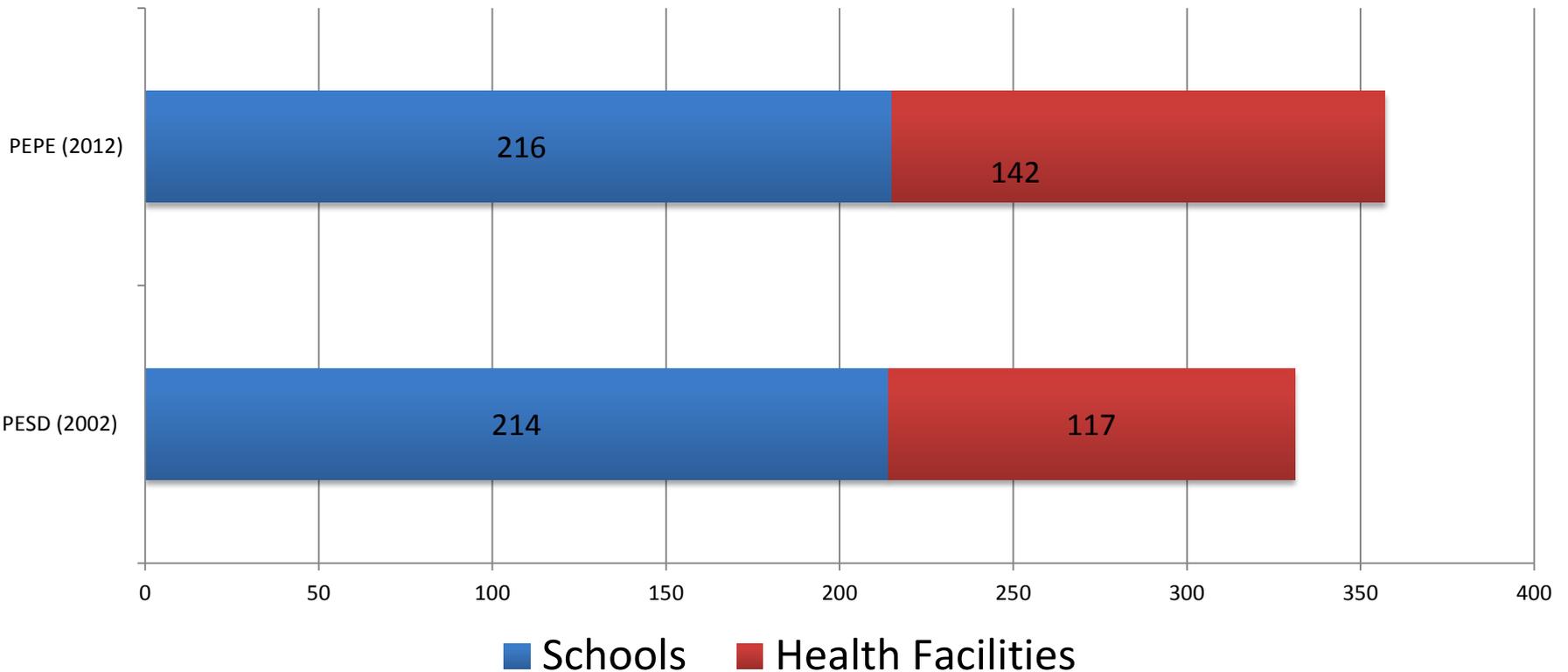
Sampling: The PEPE (2012) study went to the same primary schools, where possible, as the PESD (2002). We also visited health facilities in both years.

- Eight provinces chosen purposively to represent the four regions of PNG:
 - Southern Papua region (Gulf, National Capital District)
 - Highlands region (Enga, Eastern Highlands)
 - Momase region (West Sepik, Morobe)
 - Islands region (West New Britain, East New Britain)
- Random selection of districts (2-3 randomly chosen per province)
- Random selection of primary schools
- The results are weighted to better represent the number of facilities in each district/province

Schools visited: 2002 and 2012

The PEPE survey included a similar number of primary schools. When 10 year comparisons are made between the *same* schools, n = 166.

PEPE and PESD School and Health Facility Comparison



Investigation Instruments

Survey instrument: face-to-face questionnaire, tailored to:

- Provincial and district education administrators
- Head Teachers,
- Members of the P&C Committee,
- Grade 5 Teachers,
- The BoM chairperson.

Total respondents from primary schools: 808 (2002); 839 (2012)

Key Findings: The Good News

Improved enrolment, staffing and gender outcomes

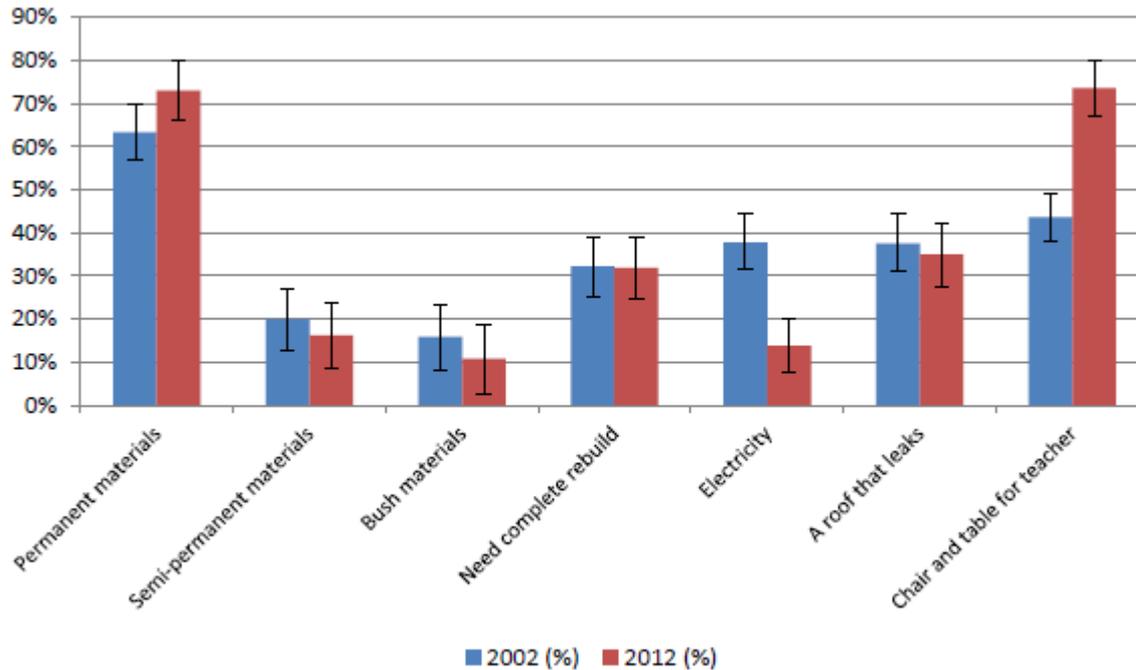
- **Enrolments have increased:** By 2012, there were 58% more children enrolled
- **Girls enrolment increased 144%** over the decade: from 30% of enrolments in 2002, to 46% in 2012
- **More children are going to school:** 70% of Parents and P&C representatives said that most children in their community went to school in 2012, up from 62% in 2002
- There are also **more teachers in the system** (but these increases are not keeping up with enrolments)
 - In 2012 there were almost two more teachers per school
 - And more of these teachers are working: 21% of teachers were *not* regularly working in 2002, this *reduced* to 10% in 2012.
- **Twice as many head teachers and grade 5 teachers are female.** In 2012:
 - 27% of head teachers were female, up from 13%
 - 55% of Grade 5 teachers were female, up from 27%

School financing has improved

- **Funding at the school level has increased:**
 - The average school received *87,846 kina in 2012*, an increase of *150%* in real terms
 - Revenue per student has *increased 112%* to 336 kina per student
- **Tuition Fee Free (TFF) direct payments are mostly getting to schools**
 - 84 per cent of schools received both TFF payments; most received payments on time.
- **Schools are receiving most if not all of their TFF subsidy:** Schools received 249kina out of a possible 270kina; the shortfall due to 16% of schools not receiving their second TFF payment
- **TFF funding has made up for a reduction in payments** from provinces and parents (between 2011 and 2012): schools received 340 kina in 2011; 336 kina in 2012.

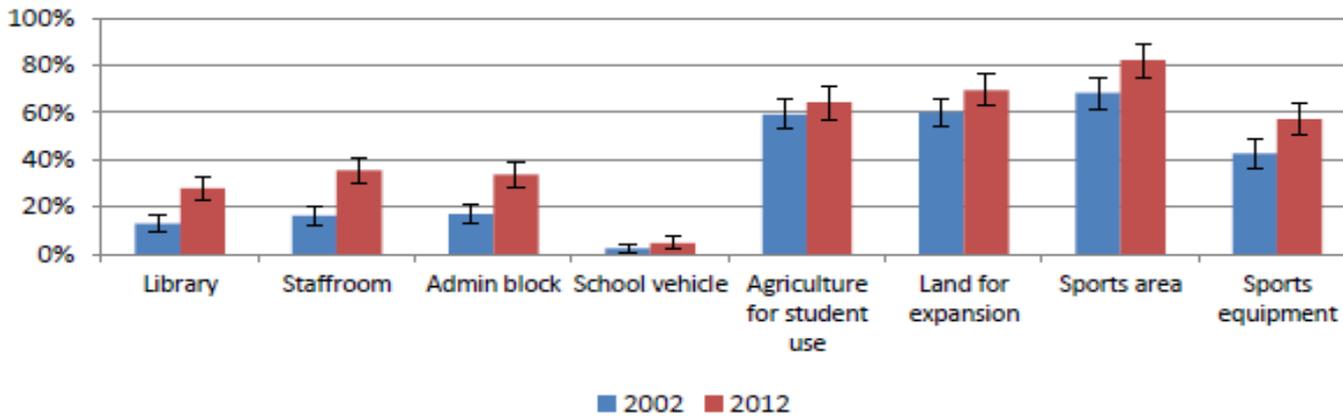
School classrooms have (mostly) improved

Condition of classrooms

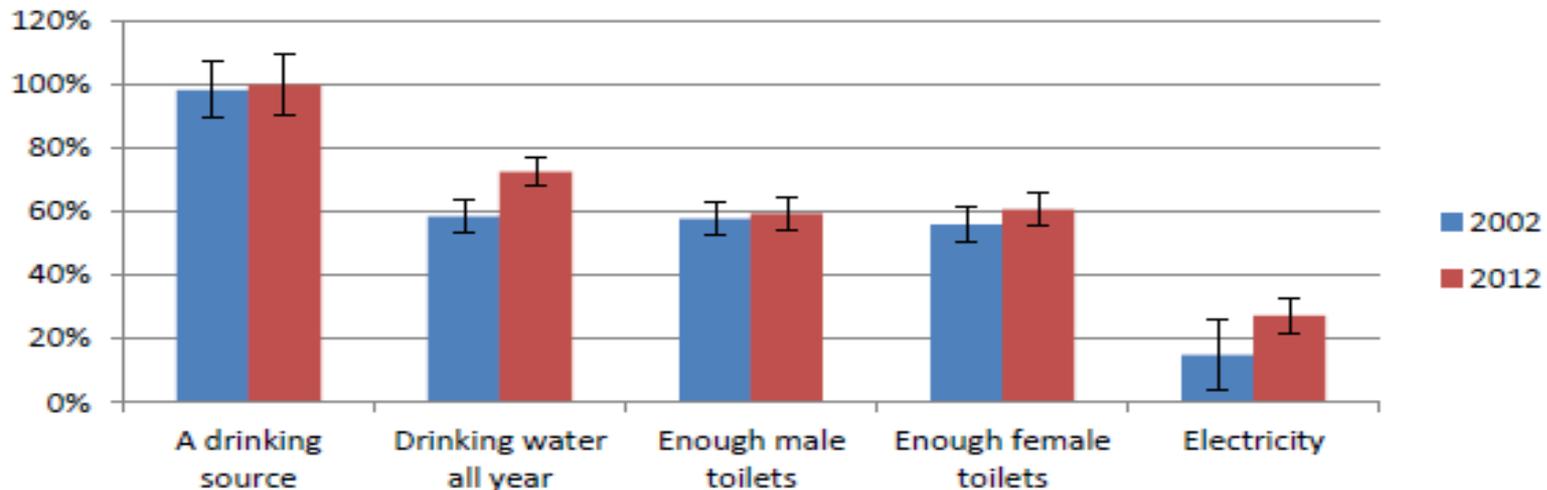


Facilities outside the classroom have improved

Schools with adequate or good provision of...



Schools with water, toilets, electricity



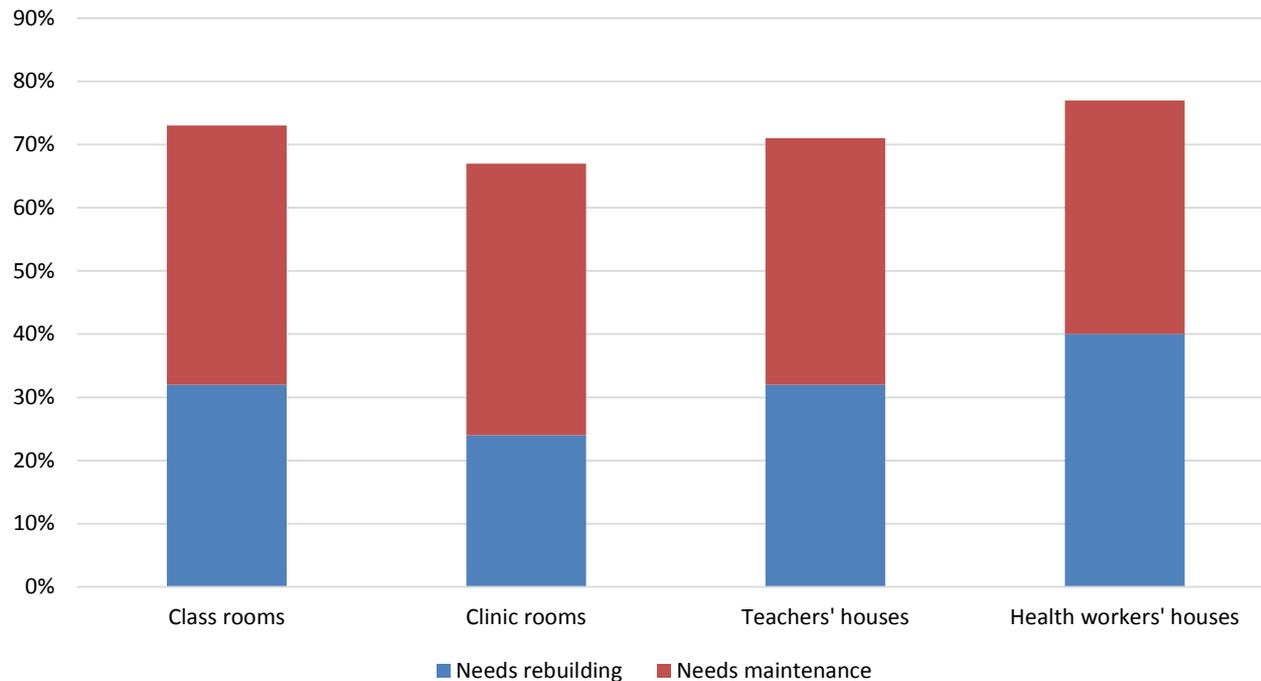
Local oversight is ubiquitous, although needs to be better engaged

- P&C Committees: 96% coverage; they meet regularly.
 - Although more needs to be done to get them involved in school decision making – **only 25%** were called to **discuss school issues**
- BoMs: 95% coverage; meet on average **four times** a year.
 - *Regression analysis*: when BoM decides about classrooms, better classroom infrastructure.
 - But only 67% of P&C Committee members believed the BoM was effective in 2012, down from 77% in 2002.

Key Findings: The Bad News

The neglect of school maintenance is still a significant problem

Rebuilding and maintenance requirements in schools and clinics, 2012



DSIP has had mixed results.

- 20% of schools had (at some point) received DSIP (average value 64,568 kina)
- 65% of DSIP projects expected to be completed in full and on time
- Only 38% of Head Teachers said DSIP was fair
- 64% said schools should be able to apply for funding directly

Poor attendance and overcrowding

- **There are signs of acute overcrowding:**
 - 2002-2012: Enrolled students-per-working-teacher increased from 31 to 36 (student per working teacher);
 - 2012: 17% of classes had more than 45 students enrolled.
- **Attendance is a problem:**
 - The proportion of Grade 5 students at school on the day of the survey fell from 84% in 2002 to 71% in 2012
 - This is likely in due to enrolment inflation, and students pulling out because of overcrowding and other issues.

Key Findings: Variations

There are key differences in the performance of church and government schools

| | | Government | | Church | |
|--|---|------------|------|--------|------|
| | | 2002 | 2012 | 2002 | 2012 |
| Most or all children in the community attend | % | 65 | 66 | 59 | 76 |
| Increase in enrolments (2002 to 2012) | % | | 50 | | 64 |
| Teachers always or often in class on time | % | 76 | 50 | 60 | 74 |
| Teachers always or often spend time teaching | % | 66 | 57 | 72 | 77 |

Regression analysis reveals that, controlling for other variables:

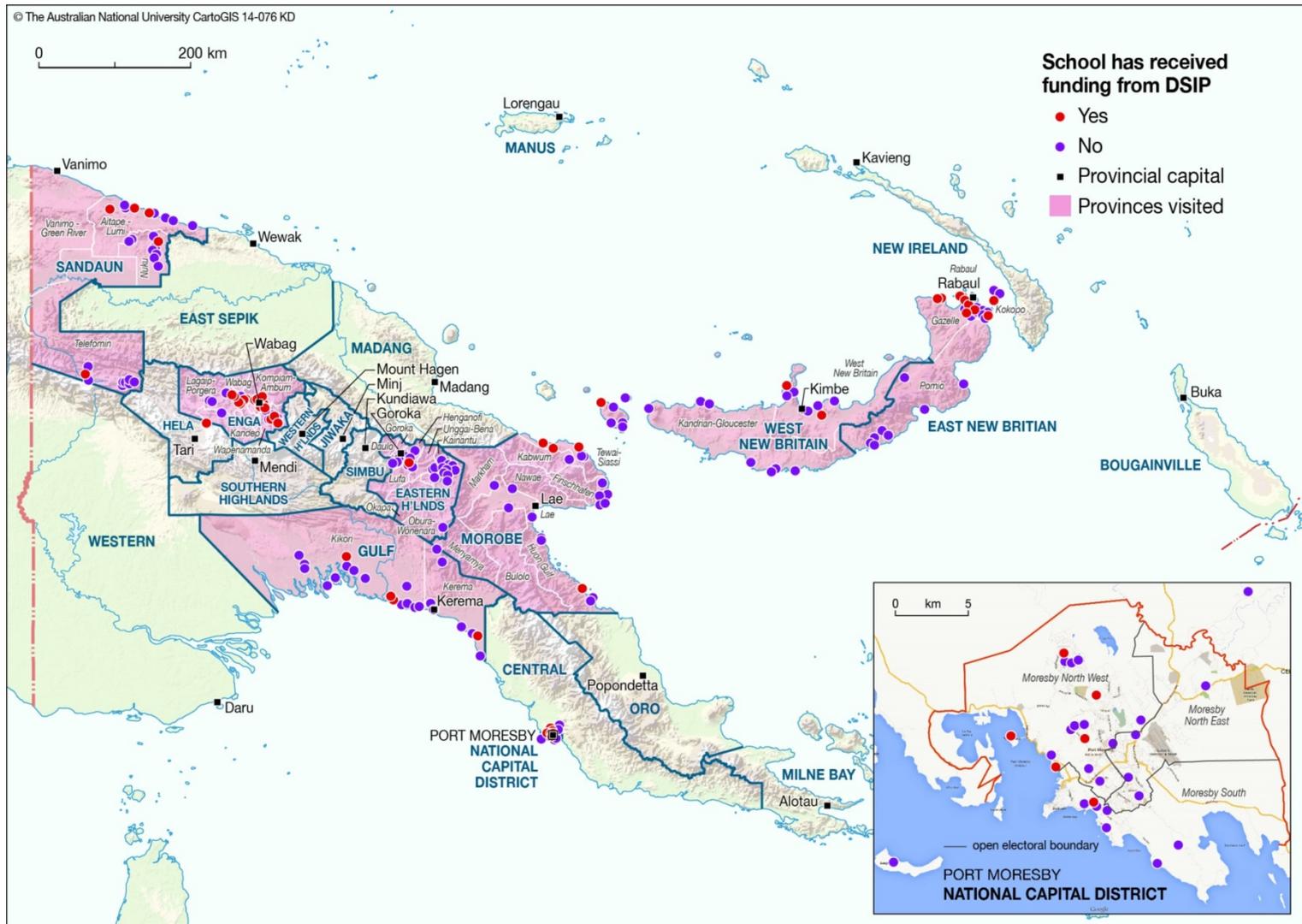
- **Teachers** are 14% **more likely** to be often or always **teaching** in **church schools**,
- **Children at church schools more likely to attend.**

There are significant provincial differences

The differences between **Gulf** and **East New Britain** were most pronounced. In 2012:

- In Gulf: 36% fewer teachers were working compared to those posted; the difference was only 2% in ENB
- In Gulf: *79 students per working teacher*; in ENB: 26 per working teacher.
- In Gulf: 61% of students present on the day; in ENB: 72% were present
- In 2012 just over half of classrooms in Gulf were made of permanent materials, compared with almost 90% in ENB

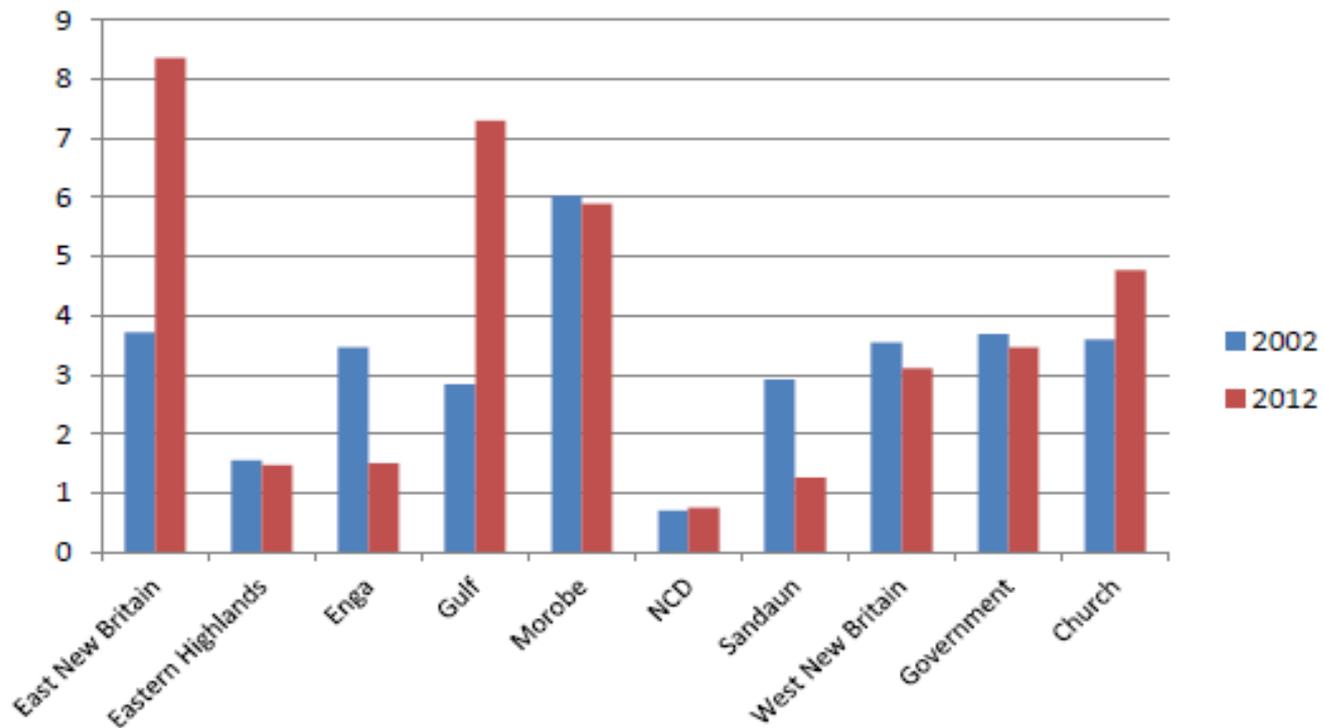
Uneven distribution of DSIP contributes to this variation



While ENB performed better than Gulf, both face some similar constraints.

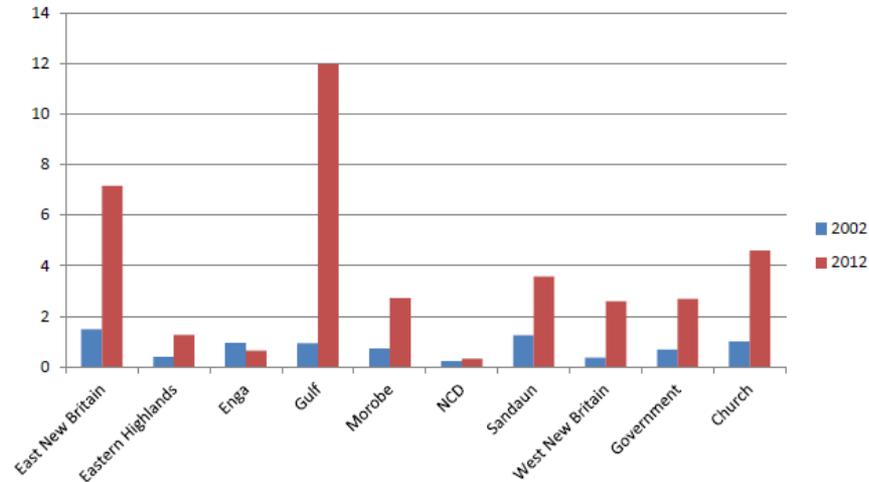
It now takes longer to get to from a school to an airstrip in ENB compared to Gulf.

Hours to an operating airstrip

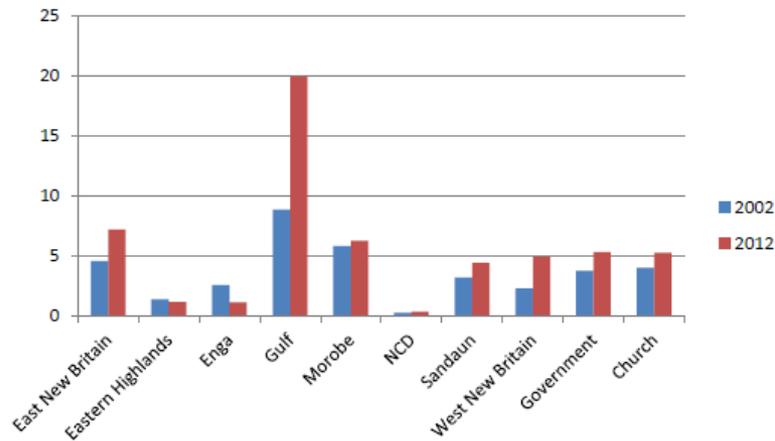


It takes significant time to get to a trade store and bank in both ENB and Gulf

Hours to get to a trade store



Hours to get to a bank



Conclusions

- The education system has not experienced a lost decade, there are many indications that the learning environment has improved.
- However, these improvements do not, on their own, result in improved literacy and numeracy.
- Indeed, there are signs that overcrowding and poor attendance is undermining gains made in the rest of the education system. More teachers and better monitoring of attendance is needed.

Conclusions

- The reasons for variations between provinces and school type requires further enquiry.
- In particular, why does ENB perform so much better than Gulf, when the education systems face some of the same constraints?
- To answer this question we plan to conduct follow up research in these two provinces. We will look at why some of the key differences manifest in these provinces and church and government schools..
- We'd love to hear your feedback.

| Issues from Lost Decade report | Questions |
|---|--|
| Limited community engagement on expenditure | <p>How much do BoMs and P&C members know about the TFF policy?</p> <p>What inhibits them from meeting?</p> <p>Why do some communities have greater involvement of BoM/P&C in school management compared to others?</p> <p>How could communities better engage with schools?</p> <p>How can government and donors encourage community engagement?</p> |
| Checks on how the subsidies are being spent rarely occur. | <p>Why are Standards Officers not checking TFF spending when they visit schools?</p> <p>What are the constraints facing Standards Offices and how could these be overcome?</p> <p>How are Standards Officers likely to be affected by the change to DDAs?</p> <p>How do SOs engage with the Head Teacher, BoM, P&C?</p> |
| Concerns about increasing absenteeism. | <p>Why is absenteeism increasing?</p> <p>Could the TFF be linked to attendance figures, rather than enrolments?</p> <p>How could community groups, government or donors help address this issue?</p> |
| Spending allocations | <p>What is the TFF spent on?</p> <p>How well are these projects managed?</p> |
| Access shock: increased enrolments have put pressure on resources | <p>How are schools managing human and other resources to address increases in enrolments? How has the TFF impacted on teacher workloads (more hours, more students per class and hence more marking etc) and how has this impacted job satisfaction and performance?</p> |

Thanks!

For more information:

- grant.walton@anu.edu.au

To download the Lost Decade report:

- <http://www.nri.org.pg/publications>
- <https://devpolicy.crawford.anu.edu.au>