

# Resource Development and Human Well-being in Papua New Guinea

## 'Issues in the Measuring of Progress'

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# The context of Literacy in PNG

- Country context
- Policy Context
- Organizational context

## Country context

- 7 million people
- 2.7% growth rate
  - 850 languages
  - 80% Rural -based
    - 44.8% illiterate
- Geographical barriers

# Policy Context

## 1. Global Policies

- Human Rights Declaration
- Millennium Development Goals
  - Education for All Goals

## • 2. Regional Policies

- Pacific Education Development Framework

## • 3. National Policies

- National Constitution
  - PNG Vision 2050
- Medium Term Development Strategy
- Long Term Development Strategy
- Universal Basic Education Plan
- Universal Primary Education Policy

# Organizational Context

- **Vision**

- “For Papua New Guinea to have literate population”

- **Mission**

- “To advance education for all people in PNG”

- **Value-based**

- Stewardship and Accountability

- **Membership-based board**

# Policy Alignment

- Global Policies: MDG and EFA
- Regional Policies: PEDF
- National Policies; National Constitution, Vision 2050, Development Strategy, and Medium Term Development Strategy
- Sectoral Policies: UBE Plan and UPE Policy,

# Positive Impacts of Literacy on Human Capabilities

- Enhances Productivity
- Broadens Earning Opportunities
- Improves Personal Well-being
- Engender healthy, equitable, gender-aware and democratic environment
- Is crucial for lifelong learning
- Build capacities, reduce vulnerabilities
- And, is crucial for promoting gender equality.

# Adult Literacy

- Progress in Adult Literacy is quite slow/uneven
- In PNG, it is the lowest of priority sub-sector in the Education Policy

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) predicts that given current trends, based on estimates derived using the conventional, self-reporting method, there will still be 710 million by 2015

This is way below the target that EFA seeks to reach

# Conventional Methods

- Self-declaration – respondents report their literacy level in response to a census or survey questionnaire
- Third-party assessment – another individual, usually the household head, reports on the literacy level of household members
- Educational attainment proxy – literacy level is determined based on the educational attainment or grade level completed by the individual

# Self-declaration

- Census derived literacy statistics that rely mainly on self –declaration were found to be grossly overstated based on surveys that used actual individual testing and assessment.
- Census data are generally provided by heads of households on behalf of other members of the family and are more likely a household opinion rather than an accurate, individual estimation

- A self-declaration question in the census and not demonstrated literacy competence generated the nationally declared figures of 56.2%.
- Studies have consistently shown that the self-declaration methodology, as used in PNG, is inaccurate and typically produces inflated literacy rates (UIS, 2009, UNSD, 2011 and ASPBAE, 2011).
- Unfortunately, despite the observation by competent bodies and organisations that the census literacy figures are inflated, little research has been undertaken to determine the actual level of literacy of males and females in PNG.

# Proportion of Participants

- different definitions for 'adults' for different countries. Our surveys recognized 15-60+ as adults.
- 15-19 are school age youth in adult literacy programs
- 20-24 years are completes the youth/adults cohorts.

# Conventional or Household

- Governments are increasingly relying on Household Surveys. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life* (UNESCO 2005) noted that almost 40% of official literacy rates in its statistical annex were based on household surveys.
- **Demand Remains:** for comprehensive, updated and reliable literacy statistics.
- Yet, majority of countries in the Asia-Pacific region still rely on the conventional methods of measuring literacy.
- Household surveys are quite expensive and are therefore undertaken at long intervals.
- Literacy surveys using direct measurement are seldom done at the local level or for specific disadvantaged groups because local governments, communities and civil society organizations do not have the capacity to undertake such initiatives.

# PNG Literacy Assessments

The assessment study classified literacy into three levels:

- **Non-literate** - unable to read or write simple words, or count objects, or use these skills in everyday life;
- **Semi-literate** – able to read simple words and sentences, write an understandable simple sentence with mostly accurate spelling, count objects and perform basic calculations, and use these skills in a limited way;
- **Literate** – able to read and comprehend text, write complete simple sentences with correct spelling, count objects and perform calculations, and use these skills.

# Literacy Assessment Instruments

- The literacy assessment instruments are designed to determine the proportion of the population possessing different levels of literacy skills.
- UNESCO Definition: *“ability to read and write, with understanding, a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life.”*
- Countries with specific definitions, a summary of which has been reported in the GMR 2006.
- Civil society groups have likewise come up with definitions that underscore the relevance of literacy skills within the context of the local community. Particular focus is given to generating data on indigenous knowledge, particularly among ethnic and disadvantaged groups.

# Pre-test of Instruments

- CAMPE, Bangladesh 2002, defined literacy: as the possession of skills in reading, writing and numeracy related to familiar contents and contexts and the ability to use these skills in everyday life in order to function effectively in society.
- Several national coalitions affiliated with ASPBAE, literacy survey instruments were developed, building on previous initiatives of civil society organizations and UNESCO.
- Survey specialists were consulted and the instruments pilot-tested to assess their validity under actual field situations

# Basic Content of Instrument

1. The Literacy Test

2. Individual and Household Profile

3. Community and Village Profile

4.

# Literacy Test

- 1) Reading skills. *Word recognition; ability to read simple sentences and paragraphs in familiar and varying contexts*
- 2) Writing skills. *Ability to write words and simple sentences and to describe something with a few sentences*
- 3) Numeracy skills. *Counting, performing simple arithmetic operations and simple problem solving*
- 4) Application of literacy skills. *Examples are recognizing time, understanding road signs and simple billboard messages, knowing directions given in simple maps and preparation of simple expense reports*

# Individual and Household Profile

- 1) Demographic profile
- 2) Education experience
- 3) Language experience
- 4) Economic activities
- 5) Parents' educational background
- 6) Household income or economic/wealth status
- 7) Access to and sources of information

# Community/Village Profile

- 1) Location and accessibility
- 2) Demographic characteristics
- 3) Main economic activities
- 4) School information
- 5) Other educational institutions
- 6) Information facilities

# Basic Methodology

- target population is determined by the results of the literacy test administered to eligible respondents for selected households
- Household selection is done through the probability sampling method that is appropriate and cost effective
- Literacy level is assessed based on the scores obtained in the literacy test. In most cases of direct assessment of literacy, the categories are more than the dichotomous classification (literate and illiterate) which is usual in the conventional methodology
- The literacy rate for the specific country, area or population is determined by comparing the number of individuals found to be literate to the population base

# Conclusion

- Conventional Methods: are self-declaration, third party and educational proxy
- Governments are questioning the credibility and reliability of literacy figures obtained from conventional methods, and leaning more towards literacy figures obtained from household survey.
- However, household surveys are expensive and take a longer time to plan; and it may not necessarily provide accurate data as per the Census Reporting of 2000 that showed results as self-declaratory.

Conventional methodology can be used for surveys that are specific, while household surveys can be inclusive.

## **Irony in a Household survey questionnaire**

A household survey question asked; “*do you have washing machine?*”

Respondent from Madang: “*Mama I stap, em wasim olgeta kolos*”

Another one asked; “*do you have toaster*”

Respondent: “*No, but we burn our food in the fire*”

Thank you for listening