

Grade 5 cohort

The numeracy, reading, and writing performance of grade five students.

Introduction to the 2021 grade five cohort

Grade five students who participated in PILNA 2021 have had different schooling experiences from previous PILNA cohorts. Formal learning in Pacific countries has been significantly disrupted since 2019, when the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in periodic school closures throughout the region. Other health-related events and natural disasters, such as the measles outbreak in Samoa and the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption, created further learning disruptions.

These events may have also had wider impacts on school-age children, such as effects on their mental health, their community commitments, and their access to education, although further research is needed to validate any wider impacts of these events.

What is relatively unique for this 2021 grade five cohort compared to the 2021 grade seven cohort is that the events between 2019 and 2021 cover a greater proportion of their formal schooling to date.

PILNA 2021 is the first large-scale regional assessment to show the consequences of these disruptions. It has collected the information necessary to link them to student performance and analysis of this information will be undertaken in the near future and provided, alongside the PILNA 2021 results, when available.

Conclusion for grade five

Grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia had mixed results in the PILNA subjects compared to PILNA 2018. They scored less in numeracy, less in reading, and more in writing than in PILNA 2018. The average scores in numeracy and reading were lower than in any other PILNA cycle, while the average score in writing was higher than any other PILNA cycle. Average scores in numeracy (457), reading (419) and writing (473) were also lower than the scores across the region (numeracy, 479; reading, 444; writing, 484).

About half the grade five students are meeting the minimum expected proficiency level in numeracy (55%) but only a small proportion are meeting it in reading (35%). Minimum expected proficiency levels for writing have not yet been established but writing performance scores are increasing.

In grade five, girls tended to score about the same as boys in numeracy (girls, 460; boys, 455) but higher than boys in reading (girls, 431; boys, 410) and writing (girls, 480; boys, 466). Also, slightly more girls were meeting the minimum expected proficiency level than boys in reading (girls, 39%; boys, 33%), but a similar proportion were meeting that level in numeracy (girls, 57%; boys, 55%).

Grade five students in non-government schools tended to score much higher in numeracy (government, 447; non-government, 532), reading (government, 404; non-government, 531), and writing (government, 465; non-government, 528) than students in government schools.

Experiential and environmental data, as outlined in the contextual sections, may provide some insights into the reasons for these performance trends.