

Year 4 cohort

The numeracy, reading, and writing performance of year four students.

Introduction to the 2021 year four cohort

Year four 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, have created further learning disruptions.

These events may have also had wider impacts on school-age children, such as changes to their mental health, 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 year four cohort compared to the 2021 year six cohort is that the events between 2019 and 2021 cover a greater proportion of their formal schooling to date. Most of their formal schooling years have been subject to periodic education disruptions.

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.

Conclusions for year four

Year four students in Fiji had mixed results across the PILNA subjects compared with PILNA 2018. The PILNA 2021 students scored lower in numeracy, lower in reading, and higher in writing than the PILNA 2018 students. Their average scores in numeracy (483) and reading (454), were higher than the scores across the region, but the average score in writing (479) was lower than that of the region (numeracy, 479; reading, 444; writing, 484).

Many year four students are not meeting the minimum expected proficiency standards in numeracy and reading. Only 66% of students were at or above the minimum expected proficiency levels in numeracy and only 48% were at or above these levels in reading. Minimum expected proficiency levels for writing have not yet been established, but writing scores are lower than the regional average, although writing performance is increasing.

In year four, girls tended to score higher than boys in numeracy (girls, 490; boys, 476), reading (girls, 466; boys, 441) and writing (girls, 488; boys, 471). Also, more girls were meeting the minimum expected proficiency levels than boys in numeracy (girls, 71%; boys, 62%) and reading (girls, 54%; boys, 41%).

Year four students in urban schools tended to score higher in reading than students in non-urban schools (urban, 462; non-urban, 441). There were no differences in the writing (urban, 482; non-urban, 476) or numeracy (urban, 485; non-urban, 480) scores of students from urban and non-urban schools.

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