

# 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, 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 grade five cohort compared to the 2021 grade five 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 grade five

Grade five students in Marshall Islands had mixed performance in the PILNA subjects. Compared with PILNA 2018, the scores for 2021 students were lower in numeracy, lower in reading, and higher in writing. Compared to the region (numeracy, 479; reading, 444;) the 2021 average scores in numeracy and reading (numeracy, 464; reading, 439;) were lower. The writing score (492) was higher than the score for the region (484).

Over half the grade five students (58%) are meeting the minimum expected proficiency standards in numeracy but only two out of five (40%) are meeting them in reading. Minimum expected proficiency levels for writing have not yet been established but writing performance is increasing.

In grade five, girls scored higher than boys in numeracy (girls, 470; boys, 458), reading (girls, 456; boys, 422) and writing (girls, 500; boys, 483). Also, more girls were meeting the minimum expected proficiency level than boys in reading (girls, 47%; boys, 34%) and numeracy (girls, 62%; boys, 54%).

Grade five students in non-government schools scored higher on average in numeracy (government, 456; non-government, 501), reading (government, 428; non-government, 486), and writing (government, 486; non-government, 515) than did

students from government schools.

Grade five students in non-urban schools tended to score higher on average in numeracy (urban, 456; non-urban, 492), reading (urban, 431; non-urban, 465), and writing (urban, 491; non-urban, 495), than did students from urban schools.

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