

Conclusion

The Asian and Pacific region is a highly diverse and rapidly changing region, exhibiting great variation across and within ADB's DMCs in population, size, economic growth, and patterns of culture. However, some commonalities can be identified in the challenges faced as education becomes recognized as a central concern in attaining the goals of national development. This booklet analyzes the regional and subregional trends, policies, and strategies in education.

Depending on the criteria of interest, a number of subregional groupings may be developed. In this study a typology of seven groups is identified and utilized to examine intraregional comparisons and to facilitate understanding of the range of education conditions and problems. The countries of South Asia, for example, contrast greatly with the more advanced East Asian economies on most economic, social, and educational indicators. The education policies and priorities of the latter may differ sharply from those of the former.

As part of the economic and social transformation taking place in Asia, education systems are expanding and being reoriented to cope with growth in social demand and to respond to economies driven by evolving industrial and information technologies. The Asian and Pacific region as a whole has made major advances in the quantitative and qualitative provision of education during the last few decades. Most DMCs have achieved, or are well on the way to achieving, universal primary education. For Southeast Asian countries basic education is increasingly being defined to include nine years of schooling. For many countries, the new thrusts are in expansion of secondary education; the coming decades will bring high rates of growth in tertiary education. Several East Asian economies currently have well-established mass systems of secondary and tertiary education. The more economically advanced are among the world's leaders in student achievement on core subject areas as measured by comparison of national test scores. In poorer countries and disadvantaged areas of the majority of countries, illiteracy persists and education opportunities remain limited and typically gender biased against girls. Changes in the locus of control over education are under way, being initiated, or subject to serious debate, in most Asian countries. The objectives of such reform vary by country and over time, but include the delegation of certain education responsibilities traditionally held in the central government to lower echelons. The extent of decentralization may have a profound effect on a broad range of planning, financial, curriculum, teaching, and evaluation decisions.

Although ADB and other international agencies may play significant roles, in meeting current social and education challenges in Asia, national and subnational governments remain the key actors. In recent years, government

efforts have been complemented to an increasing degree by private, community, and nongovernment actors. National, and in some countries local, governments are facing hard investment choices, often in the context of political uncertainty and with few resources for which there is much competition. Nevertheless, there is ample room for optimism. DMCs have demonstrated capacity for working within conditions of scarcity and uncertainty, for sharing information and knowledge regionally, and for valuing strong education institutions as requisites for attaining economic and social goals.

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Appendix

The following is a list of the eight Country Sector Studies referred to in this booklet:

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Office of Educational and Cultural Research and Development. 1997. *Study of Trends, Issues and Policies in Education (Indonesia Case Study)*. Country Sector Study prepared for ADB. Members of the Research Team included: Sri Hardjoko Wirjomartono (Coordinator); Jiyono; Ace Suryadi; Jahja Umar; Jamil Ibrahim; Arief Sukadi; Suheru Muljoatmodjo; Bambang Indriyanto; Agung Purwadi; Ade Cahyana; Safrudin Chamidi

Kyrgyz Republic:

Kyrgyz Research Institute of Higher Education Problems, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. 1997. *Country Report: Regional Study of Trends, Issues and Policies in Education*. Country Sector Study prepared for ADB. Members of the Research Team included: D.A. Amanaliev; I.B. Becboev; G.M. Belaya; U.N. Brimkulov; N.N. Janaeva; M.T. Imankulova; L.P. Miroshnichenko; V.L. Machnovsky; S.K. Marzaev; A.A. Shaimergenov; V.K. Jantzen.

Nepal:

Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development, Tribhuvan University. 1997. *Trends, Issues and Policies of Education in Nepal: A Case Study*. Tripureshwor, Kathmandu. Country Sector Study prepared for ADB. Members of the Research Team included: Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya; Bijaya Kumar Thapa; Roshan Chitrakar.

Pakistan:

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics. 1997. *Trends, Issues and Policies in Education: A Case Study of Pakistan*. Islamabad, Pakistan. Country Sector Study prepared for ADB. Researcher: Naushin Mahmood.

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Institute of National Affairs. 1997. *Regional Study of Trends, Issues and Policies in Education: Papua New Guinea Country Case Study*. Country Sector Study prepared for ADB.

Philippines:

Development Academy of the Philippines. 1997. *Policies, Trends and Issues in Philippine Education*. A Case Study Commissioned by UNESCO-Bangkok, Thailand for ADB. The Task Force Members included: Ramon C. Bacani; Napoleon B. Imperial; Juan M. Sabulao; Mario Taguiwalo; Charles C. Villaneuva; Carmencita T. Abella; Alma Bella Z. Generao. Research Team Members included: Elizabeth Y. Manugue - Research Lead; Eduardo T. Gonzalez; Anicetas C. Laquian; Merialda F. Nadunop; Mercedita C. Amar; Shiela D. Valencia.

Viet Nam:

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