

External Assistance to Education



External assistance⁴⁶ is an important source of additional funding and technical expertise that affects education development in PDMCs in many different ways. This section will review the assistance provided by ADB and other external bilateral, multilateral, and private agencies. Much of it supports country activities but an important and growing amount is supporting regional cooperation initiatives and programs. In the past, much of the external assistance was project specific. Results often have been less than expected. Moreover, the transaction costs of the aid programs—project design, negotiations, progress reporting, and supervision—often are a significant burden for small countries with few specialists. An important recent development is the commitment of funding agencies that are actively supporting education in the region to work together more closely, to program their support in the framework of sector development programs, and to harmonize their procedures.

ADB's Assistance to Education

ADB involvement in Pacific education has expanded in recent years and has been moving strategically toward improving basic

⁴⁶ Tables in Appendix 4 provide funding amount provided by various bilateral and multilateral agencies.

education services in PDMCs. Since 1981, ADB has provided a total of \$82.26 million for nine loans and \$7.0 million for 22 technical assistance grants to the education sector. However, out of total lending, about 30% was allocated to postsecondary (TVET and tertiary) education, 27% to skills development activities, and 26% to basic education (encompassing mainly primary and secondary education). And of total technical assistance funds about \$2.9 million were used for project preparatory activities whereas the rest was used for sector studies, capacity building, and ICT. Most technical assistance and loans were project-specific, rarely took a comprehensive view of the education and training sector of a country, and did not analyze links among subsectors. Since the mid-1990s, ADB has focused more on the education sector as a whole. The education development project in the Cook Islands and the Samoan education sector project are examples. ADB has gradually been moving toward a sector-wide approach for better investment impact. In other cases, it has addressed education issues in the framework of an integrated social services program. The basic social services project in FSM is an example of this approach. It aims at assisting the government in designing and introducing essential reforms in both the health and education sectors in order to develop the human resources of FSM in a sustainable manner.

Of the nine education projects that ADB has supported since 1981, six were approved in the last five years. Five projects have supported skills development, and four have supported basic education. The technical assistance program has supported 12 operations in the education sector in the Pacific since 2000, half for skills development. PNG has been the largest client with three lending and six technical assistance operations, followed by Samoa (one loan and four operations) and RMI (two loans and one operation). (See Tables A4.1 and A4.2, Appendix 4.)

Completion reports are available for four operations. A key lesson learned in the education development project in the Cook Islands (Loan 1317-COO[SF]) and the basic education development project in RMI (Loan 1249-RMI[SF]) is the importance of a sector development plan to guide resource allocation and coordinate activities of different aid agencies. Both reports emphasize the need to take account of and address in the project design institutional weaknesses and weak management capacity. In line with these recommendations and ADB's overall education sector policy, PARD

has begun to support sector approaches through analyses designed to develop medium- and long-term strategic education plans in some PDMCs. This will be continued and adopted whenever appropriate.

Education Activities of Other Funding Agencies

Bilateral funding agencies are important contributors to the education sector in the Pacific. Of these, AusAID has been the largest donor. From 1995 to 2003, on average, AusAID provided A\$94.25 million per year to 17 countries. The total during 2002–2003 was about A\$91.0 million of which PNG received the highest amount (66%). Other recipients were Vanuatu (7%), Kiribati (6%), Fiji Islands (5%), Samoa (4%), Tonga (2%), and Tuvalu (2%). Distribution of funding by subsector is as follows: primary (34.5%), secondary (4.2%), higher education including scholarships and TVET (42%), and education policy and administrative management/capacity building (13%). About 20% of the total went to capacity building, including sector programs, and 5% went to regional programs. AusAID is increasingly shifting its support to basic education. For 2002–2003, A\$31.4 million was spent on primary education vs. A\$4.6 million on higher education. (See Table A4.3, Appendix 4.)

NZAID identifies its priorities in education in its recently finalized education policy strategy. These are (i) basic education with the aim of assisting core partner countries to achieve EFA goals, and (ii) post basic and tertiary education in its core partner countries and through selected regional programs with an emphasis on achieving gender equality at these levels of education by 2015. For NZAID, basic education encompasses the first 10 years of education (early childhood to junior secondary) including literacy, indigenous education, TVET, and distance programs. Of the total amount of funding in 2002–2003, about \$15.5 million (68%) was allocated to postsecondary and higher education including scholarships and TVET. Other subsector allocations show 13% for primary, 9% for secondary, 8% for ICT, and about 3% for nonformal and skills development programs. There is a recent shift of emphasis from tertiary to basic education that is not yet visible in data on resource allocation by subsector. (See Table A4.4, Appendix 4.)

The Japan International Cooperation Agency is focusing on: improvement of basic education by supporting school infrastructure

development; improvement of math, science, music, and arts; vocational education at the high school or polytechnic level; and ICT at USP. Education for people with disabilities is another area of focus especially in Fiji Islands.

The US compact fund provides budgetary support to FSM, Palau, and RMI. During 1999–2000, the US government provided 85.7% to FSM, 77% to RMI, and 45.3% to Palau from its total aid of \$154.4 million (23.5% of total aid from all sources) to the Pacific. In addition, the US government provides various federal grants and other cash and voluntary support for which exact information is not available. In 2004–2005, the total education grant from the US to FSM was a total of \$40.4 million, e.g., 41% of total compact grants. In 2004–2006, Palau will receive \$2 million each year or a total of \$6 million for education. In RMI, the total support consisted of 83% from the US (46% US compact fund and 37% US federal grants) in 2003–2004.

Among the multilateral donors, the World Bank since 1976 has provided US\$109.5 million to PNG (50%), Solomon Islands (25%), and Timor-Leste (25%). It also helped Samoa with a small grant to prepare an education sector study. About \$5.4 million in grant and International Development Association credit has been planned for Tonga and Vanuatu for the next few years. At present, the World Bank is leading two multidonor projects in Timor-Leste. It is also funding the preparation of a human resource development strategy paper for PNG and a regional one for the Pacific. The EU's total planned funding from 2003 to 2008 is \$48.7 million of which about \$34.2 million is provided on a country-specific basis for six countries and US\$14.5 million for regional initiatives (\$9 million for PRIDE and \$5.5 million for USP human resource development). The EU funding mostly covers all subsectors except universities and refers mainly to education infrastructure, equipment, and learning materials. The EU is ready to support an education program in countries where a conducive policy and sector investment environment exists. (See Tables A4.5 and A4.6, Appendix 4.)

UNESCO's regional office in Samoa manages some donor funding. For the next two years, UNESCO is implementing two projects funded by the Japanese government. The first (\$250,000) supports teacher training in remote and rural parts of the Pacific through teacher training institutions with a regional vocation. The second for the same amount supports the collection, maintenance, and use of educational data. This latter project will be led by the UNESCO

Statistics Institute and will include work in all Pacific countries. The regional office has seed funding in the program budget for regular workshops for EFA national coordinators and for meetings of directors of education.⁴⁷ UNICEF focuses on early childhood development activities. It has also been active in making primary schools child friendly through projects in four countries. In addition, it supports some regional programs. (See Table A4.7, Appendix 4.)

External funding has often been slow to adjust to emerging national and international priorities. However, almost all the funding agencies are committed to supporting PDMCs in achieving the MDGs and the EFA goals, and therefore generally recognize the need for appropriate resource allocation to basic education. This implies in several cases a reordering of subsector priorities which is now underway. External assistance is thus likely to have an increasingly strong focus on achieving high-quality basic education. This will also help PDMCs meet the international commitments that their governments have made.

Public/Private Partnerships

Private and nongovernment agencies (church, community, and NGOs) play a significant role in providing educational services. Some church schools receive considerable funding from their international networks. The Church of Seventh Day Adventists and other Protestant churches have schools in many PDMCs including Kiribati, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Further, NGOs are very active in providing nonformal education for poorer groups. One of the most important NGOs in PNG is the Summer Institute of Linguistics that plays a key role in developing vernacular language materials for basic education. Education ministries and departments often work in partnership with church groups, communities, and NGOs and discuss strategies and policies to provide quality education and to reduce pressure on the public sector. Public schools may send their teachers to observe classroom practices and processes in private schools or may organize workshops to introduce effective teaching and learning. Governments may consider adopting good practices from private

⁴⁷ Information provided by the UNESCO office in Samoa.

schools to improve their service delivery mechanisms. They may also make effective and systematic use of voluntary teachers provided through the Peace Corps (US), Volunteer Service Overseas (United Kingdom), Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, Australian Volunteers Abroad, Volunteer Service Abroad (New Zealand), and UN Volunteers where countries lack teachers.