

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: MKSS

TA No. and Name TA 2996-THA: Education Management and Financing Study			Amount Approved: \$479,720.00		
			Revised Amount: \$479,720.00		
Executing Agency: Office of the National Education Commission	Source of Funding: JSF Sub-source: Regular Contribution		TA Amount Undisbursed \$2,715.00	TA Amount Utilized \$477,005.00	
Date			Closing Date		
Approval 12 March 98	Signing 4 May 1998	Fielding of Consultants June 1998	Original 31 Dec 2000	Actual 31 Mar 2000	
Description					
<p>It was anticipated that the economic crisis would affect the education sector through an increase in drop-outs from school systems at all levels of education (particularly at the upper secondary and higher education levels), reduced budgets for the sector, and a resource crunch for private schools. In addition, several sources of inefficiency existed in the education system that needed immediate consideration. Inadequate focus on quality of education represented one of the critical constraints in Thailand's competitiveness and was partly responsible for the crisis. Under the proposed Social Sector Program Loan, the Government was committed to undertake wide-reaching reforms in education to meet the short and long-term challenges facing the sector.</p> <p>Specifically, the Government undertook to address five policy priorities under the Social Sector Program Loan: (i) reduction of the incidence of dropouts from the school system for financial difficulties; (ii) improvement in the quality of priority education programs through better allocation of resources; (iii) rationalization of the staff size and deployment, and the establishment of a new personnel management framework in line with the Government's general decentralization policy to delegate greater authority and responsibility to local governments; (iv) financial and management decentralization to make all levels of education more responsive to societal and community needs; and (v) promotion of private sector in the provision of education and training. To formulate an effective implementation strategy for these ambitious policy reforms, the Government required detailed information and analytical support.</p>					
Objectives and Scope					
<p>The objective of the TA was to prepare an integrated sector-wide analysis of education and training in Thailand, focusing on costs, financing, and management issues. Specifically, the TA had the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) improve efficiency, equity and sustainability of the student loan program by reviewing its implementation and providing recommendations for its administration; (ii) undertake a public expenditure review, and design an action plan for improved allocation of resources for the sector; (iii) prepare a teaching personnel strategy clearly identifying the future requirements of teachers by skills, levels and geographical regions; and (iv) prepare legal instruments and develop implementation strategy for the management decentralization of education services. <p>To meet these objectives, the TA had the following four components: (a) Evaluation of the student loan scheme, both through examining official records and through a targeted survey. The review was designed to help in developing a set of recommendations for efficient and equitable functioning of the scheme; (b) Public Expenditure Review to identify and make recommendations to refine current expenditure patterns and major sources and uses of finance for education. The TA aimed to recommend a new mechanism for identifying and tracking priority program expenditures to support education policy formulation; (c) Teaching personnel strategy study to present recommendations on: (i) the hiring policies of teachers; (ii) the need for regional and grade-level redeployment of teachers; and (iii) training needs to move primary school teachers to lower secondary level; and (d) Operational support for decentralization to support the Government's efforts to decentralize the management responsibilities to provincial and lower units by helping in drafting guidelines, legislation and operational manuals. Specifically, the TA aimed to develop legal instruments for delegation of authority to the local government bodies, draft sample service contracts for the teachers under their future new employers, and prepare a detailed implementation strategy for management decentralization.</p>					

Evaluation of Inputs

The TA design was adequate and the TORs clear and comprehensive, and no significant modifications were called for during the implementation. The TA was implemented by a joint team managed by UNESCO and the Thailand Research Fund. The TA provided the services of 3 international consultants totaling 15 person-months and 7 domestic consultants totaling 30 person-months. The TA also provided for field surveys (including the cost of a field survey coordinator, a data analyst, data enumerators and necessary operational costs) and dissemination of the study findings. The overall performance of the team was satisfactory.

The Office of National Education Commission (ONEC) was the executing agency for the TA. A steering committee consisting of 17 representatives from the Civil Services Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of University Affairs, Budget Bureau, NESDB and other related agencies was set up to oversee the progress of the TA, which also received guidance from the Project Coordination and Management Committee headed by a Deputy Prime Minister and set up to oversee the Social Sector Program Loan. The performance of the EA in implementing the TA is rated as satisfactory. Inputs from technical UN agencies and bilateral agencies interested in the issues were actively sought. The TA was adequately supervised through regular meetings and discussions with the consultants and four review missions. The performance of ADB in supporting the implementation of the TA is rated as satisfactory.

Evaluation of Outputs

The TA teams produced the following reports: (i) Education Management and Financing in Thailand: Review and Recommendations Summary Report, July 1999; (ii) Management of Education in Thailand: A Review and Recommendations for an Implementation Strategy for Decentralization, July 1999; (iii) Teaching Personnel Strategy in Thailand: A Review and Recommendations, July 1999; (iv) Educational Finance in Thailand: A Review and Recommendations for Improving Allocative Efficiency, July 1999; (v) The Student Loan Scheme in Thailand: A Review and Recommendations for Efficient and Equitable Functioning of the Scheme, July 1999; and (vi) Technical Assistance Inception Report, July 1998. These reports were according to the terms of reference agreed with the Government and of acceptable quality. The EA and the Government were in general satisfied with the outcome. The reports were translated into the Thai language and helped the Government in the implementation of policy reforms agreed under the Social Sector Program Loan. Also, the work done under the TA formed the basis for the ongoing TA3585: Education Sector Reforms. The outputs were produced within agreed time-frame and resources.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is rated as *successful*. The TA outputs fully followed the TORs and effectively facilitated the mainstreaming of reforms in the education sector proposed under the Social Sector Program Loan. The TA also helped in considerable capacity building at ONEC, especially in the field of teaching personnel management. The outputs of the TA have remained relevant for the education sector in Thailand. The Government used the study on the student loan scheme as the basis to develop policy recommendations for more equitable and efficient management of the scheme.

Wide-ranging reforms have been initiated in the education sector since the implementation of the TA. A new National Education Act has been put in place, which emphasizes decentralization of education, improving the quality of education and strengthening learning outcomes in sciences, mathematics and foreign languages. The reforms also supported organizational changes both at the policymaking and management level as well as at the school level. The TA outputs on decentralization strategies, teaching personnel management and student loan scheme reform are of continuing relevance in this reform process.

Major Lessons Learned

The TA was based in ONEC rather than the Ministry of Education. The experience of the TA implementation shows that policy research and capacity building activities can be effectively implemented even if they are not directly implemented by the line agency. In such situations, however, it is important to have good mechanisms for coordination and follow up with line agencies.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

There is no direct follow up required on the output of the TA by ADB. However, the Government is expected to continue to effectively use the TA outputs for implementing the ongoing reform process. ADB-supported TA 3585 is providing follow-up support.

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