



Completion Report

Project Number: 46369-001
Technical Assistance Number: 8187
June 2016

Myanmar: Support for Education Sector Planning

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TA Number, Country, and Name:			Amount Approved: \$570,000	
TA 8187-MYA: Support for Education Sector Planning			Revised Amount: Not Applicable	
Executing Agency: Myanmar Ministry of Education		Source of Funding: TASF-Others: \$200,000; Government of Australia: \$370,000	Amount Undisbursed: \$51,567.34	Amount Utilized: 518,432.66
TA Approval Date: 10 Oct 2012	TA Signing Date: 23 Oct 2012	Fielding of First Consultants: 20 Nov 2012	TA Completion Date Original: 31 Oct 2014 Actual: 28 Feb 2015 Account Closing Date Original: 31 Oct 2014 Actual: 28 May 2015	
Description. Recognizing the need for an educated population and workforce as essential for sustained economic growth and poverty reduction, in 2011, the Government of Myanmar redoubled efforts to strengthen the education sector, reflected in a doubling of the education budget between fiscal year FY2011/12 and FY2012/13. However, a dearth of data posed a key obstacle to education sector reforms, perhaps particularly in the post-primary education (PPE) subsectors—the secondary education subsector (SES), technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and the higher education subsector (HES)—which involve multiple ministries and linkages to the labor market, and had received little development partner organization (DPO) support. The government also recognized the need to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other agencies to analyze data and incorporate international experience to inform evidence-based policy reforms and education sector planning. In view of these challenges, in July 2012, Myanmar’s President approved MOE plans to undertake a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR)—the first rigorous assessment of the sector in two decades—to more clearly pinpoint sector challenges and priorities, feeding into formulation of an evidence-based education sector plan to guide investments by the government and DPOs. Following Asian Development Bank (ADB) involvement in CESR’s initial conceptualization, the government requested ADB to support the CESR via capacity development technical assistance (TA). In particular, the government and DPOs called on ADB to support analysis and planning for PPE, complementing support from other DPOs focused principally on primary, pre-primary, and nonformal education.				
Expected Impact, Outcome, and Output. The TA’s guiding impact was the implementation of viable, sequenced, and adequately resourced education planning. Its targeted outcome was a strengthened knowledge base and institutional capacity for PPE subsector planning. Supporting these objectives, the TA targeted three outputs: (i) PPE subsector studies completed; (ii) regional experience and lessons disseminated and applied; and (iii) analytical and planning capacities of key post-primary education related agencies strengthened.				
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities. Formulated in close dialogue with MOE, the DPO coordinators for the CESR—Australia (which cofinanced the TA) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)—and other DPOs, the TA was highly relevant and directly aligned to the government-led, DPO-supported CESR. To ensure government ownership and build analytical capacities in-country, the CESR adopted a collaborative approach: staff and consultants from ADB and other DPOs worked closely with the CESR Team of government-seconded staff to conduct analysis and prepare detailed reports on specific subsectors/dimensions, with findings distilled into compilation volumes for CESR Phase 1 (Rapid Assessment) and Phase 2 (In-Depth Analysis). To flexibly respond to evolving needs and support from other DPOs, the TA used a facility-type design, wherein the TA paper detailed terms of reference linked to CESR Phase 1, allowing flexibility to program support to CESR Phase 2 based on Phase 1 findings and dialogue with MOE and the cofinancier (via a minor change of scope in April 2013). The performance of the executing agency (MOE), consultants, and ADB were highly satisfactory. Reflecting strong joint formulation dialogue and government ownership, the TA Agreement was signed less than 2 weeks after ADB’s approval, and TA implementation benefited from sustained ownership and inputs from MOE and other government agencies. ¹ Thanks in part to selection of individuals with extensive experience in similar reform contexts, consultant and resource inputs were excellent (as reflected in consultant evaluations) and were highly appreciated by government counterparts. As part of ADB’s strategy for education sector engagement, ADB staff fielded nine missions during TA implementation and were closely involved in the analysis, capacity development, and policy dialogue, further supporting TA performance. More broadly, as the first phase of ADB’s sector engagement strategy, this TA provided the foundation for a dovetailed 2013 policy and advisory TA (also cofinanced by Australia) and subsequent assistance, supporting ADB’s emergence as the lead overall DPO supporting reforms of Myanmar’s PPE subsectors. ²				
Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome. The TA completed its expected deliverables—meeting and exceeding deliverables targeted in the design and monitoring framework (DMF)—by the original end date, and was extended by 4 months to accommodate further dialogue following the government’s extension of the timeline for				

¹ The timeline of government signature and TA effectiveness is believed to be the fastest of all ADB TAs in Myanmar to date.

² ADB. 2013. *Technical Assistance to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for Support for Post-Primary Education Development*. Manila (TA 8385-MYA).

CESR Phase 2. **Output 1** supported the preparation of six high quality reports that served as technical and supplementary annexes to CESR Phase 1 and 2 compilation volumes.³ Responding to MOE's request mid-implementation, the TA also supported Myanmar's first (and still only) large-scale survey of secondary education schools, head teachers, teachers, and students.⁴ Under **output 2**, the TA supported a series of technical reports and briefs distilling relevant international experience to support CESR analysis and policy dialogue on emerging issues. Examples included (i) a report assessing reform options for secondary education curriculum, pedagogy, and student assessment;⁵ (ii) short papers and presentations on TVET at a series of roundtables and a January 2014 National TVET Conference; and (iii) the lead technical presentation, a paper, and inputs to a joint monograph for a high-profile June 2013 policy forum on higher education supported by ADB, Australia, British Council, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which included senior officials, parliamentarians including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, nongovernment organizations, and other stakeholders.⁶ For all PPE subsectors, the TA supported comparative analysis of gender dimensions in Myanmar and regionally, as well as completion of a CESR Phase 2 technical annex assessing the impact of ASEAN integration on labor markets and skill needs in Myanmar. Finally, under **output 3**, the government was highly appreciative of capacity building, which included: (i) a two-part initial capacity development seminar for roughly 40 staff (including 32 females) of the CESR Team and other staff from MOE, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and other key agencies; and (ii) a sustained and tailored capacity development program for 20 members (including 13 females) of the CESR Team sub-teams for secondary education, TVET, higher education, and teacher education during CESR Phases 1-2. The TA achieved its outcome, including DMF targets on incorporation of PPE analysis into MOE's CESR Phase 1 and Phase 2 compilation volumes and strengthened capacity to implement related interventions under the umbrella of the approved Policy and Programme Framework of the National Education Strategic Plan, 2016-2021 (NESP).

Overall Assessment and Rating. The TA is rated as highly successful. The government strongly appreciates the TA's contribution to the CESR and Myanmar's ongoing education reforms, which are also recognized in the final review of ADB's Interim Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) and the Independent Evaluation Department validation report.⁷ The latter also recognize the role of the TA (as ADB's first country-level education sector support to Myanmar) in building a firm foundation for ADB's successful engagement in the education sector, ADB's emergence as a lead DPO supporting PPE subsectors, and expanded support for secondary education and TVET via a proposed 2016 sector development program (SDP) and under ADB's forthcoming CPS.⁸ Incorporation of TA recommendations in the NESP and follow-on ADB support via the noted 2016 SDP suggest strong sustainability.⁹

Major Lessons. A general lesson is that TA can be a highly effective instrument in supporting ADB engagement in key sectors, even under challenging contexts, though this may require ADB to think outside the box. In particular, the TA's success hinged on: (i) intensive up-front dialogue with the government to ensure ownership, as well as DPO coordination; (ii) the combination of flexible facility-type design with hands-on ADB staff involvement, to ensure timely response to evolving contexts and build strategic government-ADB dialogue; and (iii) emphasis on multi-partner coordination and collaboration, providing sustained support to government counterparts to jointly conduct analysis and assess policy options (i.e., learning by doing), as opposed to a more expeditious, consultant-driven approach. Finally, in-depth analysis is a prerequisite to inform effective approaches to advance equity across gender and other dimensions: e.g., TA-supported analysis demonstrated that many prior assumptions were overly simplistic or wrong.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions. Building on the strong track record of this TA and 3 subsequent education TAs in Myanmar, and consistent with the noted Interim CPS Final Review, related validation report, and draft CPS for 2017-2021, ADB should continue to deepen its engagement in Myanmar's education sector, focusing on SES (where ADB is the sole DPO giving concerted support) and TVET, in close collaboration with other DPOs. Flexible facility-type designs may be effective in ensuring TAs respond to government demands and a rapidly evolving Myanmar context, if backed up by adequate ADB staff involvement throughout implementation.

TA = technical assistance.

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³ These annex reports—which included significant analysis of equity across gender and other dimensions—are online at MOE's CESR website (www.cesrmm.org) and <http://www.adb.org/projects/46369-001/main#project-documents>

⁴ The survey covered 786 schools of all types offering secondary grades, distributed across all states and regions nationwide. The TA also supported a more limited survey of SES teacher training at 3 teacher education institutions, complementing a larger UNICEF study on pre-service teacher education for primary education teachers.

⁵ ADB staff also supported sharing of experience from ADB-supported reforms in Lao PDR and other neighboring countries. ADB support for SES curriculum reforms in Myanmar has involved close coordination with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which is supporting primary education curriculum reforms.

⁶ See https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/report_empowering_higher_education_dialogue.pdf

⁷ See (i) ADB. 2015. *Interim Country Partnership Strategy Final Review*. Manila; and (ii) ADB. 2015. *Myanmar: Country Partnership Strategy 2012-204 Final Review Validation*. Manila.

⁸ The proposed \$98.5 million Equipping Youth for Employment Sector Development Program is targeted for approval in November 2016, while education and training is identified as a core sector in the CPS for 2017-2021.

⁹ Examples include the TA's recommendations on SES curriculum reforms and TVET competency-based modular short-courses.