



International organizations and the future of education assistance



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ABSTRACT

Education began to be included as a component of foreign assistance in the early 1960s as it is a principal ingredient of development. A number of multilateral and bilateral agencies were established around this time to implement various types of aid programmes; however, their effectiveness is constantly being questioned and challenged due to a variety of problems. This paper reviews the past and current activities of bilateral, multilateral organizations and private donors in education aid, examines their effectiveness, discusses major problems in implementing educational programmes and suggests ways to improve aid in education.

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1. Introduction

Education has been found to have two categories of influences. In terms of monetary influences, the higher an individual's level of education, the less likely they will be unemployed or in poverty, and the more likely they will have better advantages in terms of income and income security. Moreover, what is true of individuals is also true of communities and nations. In terms of non-monetary influences, education has been found to affect personal health and nutrition practices, childrearing and participation in voluntary activities. It also influences the efficiency of public communications and the degree to which adults seek new knowledge and skills over a lifetime (Blaug, 1978; Schultz, 1982; McMahan, 1999).

How communities learn, therefore, is a principal ingredient of their development. In modern economies, schools and universities are the primary means by which knowledge is passed to new generations and how new knowledge is systematically incorporated (World Bank, 1995).

Education was first included as a component of foreign assistance in the early 1960s. Initially, education aid was deployed to support workforce development plans, so programmes emphasized vocational training, engineering education and immediately applicable workskills. Infrastructure investments such as highways, railroads, dams, bridges and agricultural and industrial machinery were still the most important priorities of development aid, but they needed skilled maintenance. Education aid was a way

to make sure the necessary skills were locally available (Heyneman, 2004a).

By the 1980s, education aid had grown to include primary and secondary education, humanities and social sciences, professional education and education research. The shift was triggered by the World Bank's publication of an education policy paper in 1980 that diversified the analytic models for assessing education outcomes beyond forecasting manpower needs to include calculating the economic rates of return on education investments (World Bank, 1980; Heyneman, 2009, 2010). A common finding was that primary education had the highest economic returns, leading to calls for public financing to shift from higher to primary education, and for higher education to be financed by raising private costs through tuition (Psacharopoulos et al., 1986).

That was followed in the 1990s by an approach known as 'education for all', with strong emphasis placed by donors on primary education (UNESCO, 2007). This approach has since become the dominant paradigm of education aid, with significant and often negative consequences for the sector as a whole (Heyneman, 2009, 2010, 2012a).

2. Institutional architecture¹

Foreign assistance began after Second World War for reasons of reconstruction, political influence and altruism. In general foreign aid began with the introduction of the Marshall Plan by the United States, a transfer of US\$13 billion between 1948 and 1952 to support the reconstruction of 14 European countries, with the UK receiving the highest percentage (24 per cent) and Norway

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¹ Adapted from Heyneman (2012b).

Table 1
Total ODA to education from 1995 to 2011.

Year	Total ODA	Total ODA to education	% Educational ODA
1995	57,556.47	2,888.24	5
1996	63,690.44	4,325.83	7
1997	60,510.82	4,682.08	8
1998	70,059.01	4,844.90	7
1999	77,356.45	6,403.74	8
2000	83,743.78	6,376.74	8
2001	84,861.80	6,456.63	8
2002	97,168.91	7,929.27	8
2003	114,455.73	9,128.38	8
2004	115,867.07	10,828.82	9
2005	141,228.59	8,489.96	6
2006	146,401.38	11,529.41	8
2007	135,025.36	11,611.16	9
2008	155,755.59	11,485.99	7
2009	161,627.96	13,408.07	8
2010	163,512.42	13,344.09	8
2011	148,906.84	11,030.09	7

Note: Constant prices 2010 US\$ million. All donors' commitment to developing countries reported to OECD.

Source: The figures for total ODA are derived from OECD/CRS database and the amount is different than that from the official EFA Global Monitoring Report due to different method of calculation. Thus, the portion of education ODA is slightly smaller than the official figures in EFA Global Monitoring Report.

receiving the highest allocation in per capita terms (US\$136/person) (Moyo, 2009: 12). The first *multilateral organizations* consisted of UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank (Singh, 2011). Current major multilateral aid providers include the World Bank (US\$1.7 billion), UNICEF (US\$709 million), the Asian Development Bank (US\$647 million) and the Inter-American Development Bank (US\$465 million), JICA (US\$185m), USAID (US\$1.3 billion), DFID (US\$960 million) (See the table in annex II). In 2010, approximately three-fourths of education aid flows through bilateral organizations and 26 per cent through multilaterals (OECD CRS database). Of the multilaterals, the World Bank historically has allocated the largest portion, the EU allocates the second largest portion (OECD CRS). In terms of its size within organizational budgets, education aid is generally around 4 per cent: 4 per cent at the World Bank (Table 2) and the Inter-American Bank, 4.8 per cent at the Asian Development Bank and 5.8 per cent from the EU. Surprisingly, perhaps, the African Development Bank allocates the lowest portion to education, at just 0.9 per cent.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy explained foreign aid to assist low-income countries 'not because the communists are doing it, but because it is right' (quoted in Sartorius and Ruttan 1988: 4). However, over time, foreign aid frequently combined political with humanitarian motives. In general the political motives of multilateral organizations associated with the United Nations were less manifest in part because projects and strategies had to be a product of consensus across multiple interests, including those of aid recipient countries as well as those of donor countries. On the other hand, because bilateral agencies reflected national foreign aid priorities, bilateral assistance, the national origin of consultants as well as the political and economic objectives tend to reflect those of the donor. These tendencies are not uniform however; some bilateral agencies tend to be quite agnostic with respect to the origins of consultants while others tend to be quite restrictive. However, no bilateral agency allows its assistance to be directed toward humanitarian needs alone without the influence of political or economic interest. These characteristics, moreover, pertain to new bilateral organizations in China, Russia, Korea and Brazil as well as the older ones in Europe and North America.

Bilateral organizations are those whose development projects are arranged country-by-country. The assistance which flows through bilateral organizations is distinct from that which flows through multilateral organizations. Bilateral assistance is part of a

donor nation's foreign policy. For instance, the US, in 2004, allocated the majority of its bilateral assistance to Iraq, Israel, West Bank and Gaza, Egypt, Jordan and Afghanistan (OECD-DAC). Also, among the top ten recipients of French bilateral aid, seven countries are either French speaking countries (Congo, Rep, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal), or French territories (Mayotte), or members of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) (Morocco, Vietnam, Lebanon) (OECD-DAC)

Bilateral education aid has expanded during the 1960s to 1990s. It totalled US\$3.4 billion in 1965, to up to US\$6 billion in 1980, and then to US\$3.9 billion (constant 1994 US\$) in 1995 (Mundy, 2006). However, Fig. 1 below shows that the increase was slow since the late 1990s. Fig. 1 demonstrates that in 2011, education aid accounts for US\$11 billion (constant 2010 US\$) worldwide, or about 8 per cent of total official development assistance (ODA).

Among national aid organizations, major donors include the US Agency for International Development (US\$1.3 billion), the UK's Department for International Development (US\$960 million) and Japan's JICA (US\$185 million). However, the portion of development aid dedicated to education by western aid agencies is relatively small, at just 3 per cent for both USAID and Norway's development agency, NORAD, and 4 per cent for Sweden's SIDA. By contrast, education is more of an aid priority for many bilateral agencies in Asia, with JICA devoting 14 per cent of its aid budget to education, Australia's AusAid 17 per cent and South Korea's KOICA 25 per cent.

Why do Japan and South Korea emphasize education in their foreign aid? Both economies have emerged as a result of large investments in human capital. But one explanation at least as far as Japan is concerned, is not being associated with 'trying to sell their products'. Education has a reputation of being less controversial than the sectors. Emphasis on education may lower the risk of criticism of aid serving donor's self-interest.

Bilateral organizations tend to emphasize aspects of education aid that are particularly popular or strategic to domestic interests. These may include particular areas, such as technical schools or folk development colleges, as well as particular reforms and innovations, such as bilingual education, televised education and diversified education (Heyneman, 2006a).

Though basic education continues to dominate education political objectives, funding is also directed towards a wide variety of other priorities. These include secondary education, teacher training, adult education and literacy, science education, vocational skills and higher education (OECD-CRS). In many cases, private foundations and nongovernmental organizations focus on particular areas. For instance, the Ford and Carnegie Foundations have concentrated on higher education, while the Open Society Institute (sometime called the Soros Foundation) has focused on primary and secondary education, and on civics education in particular. Many organizations fund particular areas of education

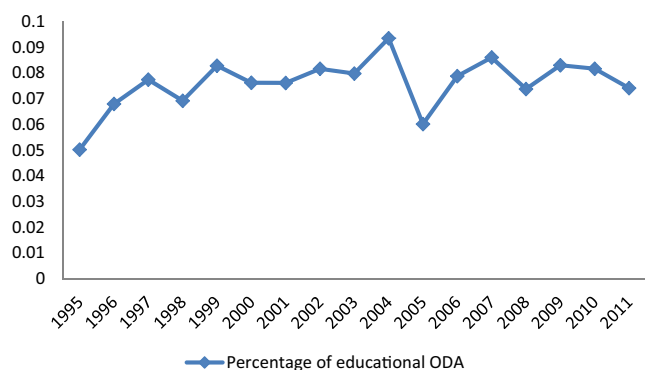


Fig. 1. Per cent of education ODA as of total ODA, 1995–2011. Source: OECD/CRS.

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