France Donor Profile

SECTORS

topics

France’s education ODA

Education is a key priority for development policy under President Macron’s government

In 2016 (latest year for which complete data is available), France was the fourth-largest donor country to education, after Germany, the US, and the UK. France disbursed US$1.4 billion in education ODA in 2016, according to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). This represents 11% of France’s total ODA, well above the 8% spent by donor countries of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on average. France’s funding for education has remained rather stable over the past few years.

However, to get a full picture of a donor’s cross-border flows for education assistance, it is important to exclude scholarships and other costs of hosting students from developing countries studying in donor countries. These costs are reported as ODA by some donors but are not spent on development programs abroad. In 2016, 58% of France’s education ODA (US$782 million) consisted of such in-country student costs. If these costs are excluded, France is the fifth-largest donor to education (US$554 million). Starting in 2019, the government has raised the fees for university students coming from countries outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). This means that a much lower share of the costs associated with their studies will be reportable as ODA, which will likely induce a decrease in in-country student costs reported by France, and in turn of France’s overall education ODA.

French President Emmanuel Macron has made education a key priority of his government’s international development policy. France considers global education both a pillar of international development and an instrument of France’s cultural diplomacy in the world. In February 2018, France showed international leadership by co-hosting the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Financing Conference in Dakar, Senegal. On this occasion, France announced a significant scale-up of its contributions to GPE. The government committed €200 million (US$260 million according to GPE) to the GPE Fund, accompanied by an additional €100 million (US$111 million) in bilateral funding through the French Development Agency (AFD). Since 2002, France has contributed a total of US$146 million to GPE, making it the 11th-largest contributor (as of April 2019).

GPE contributions are reported as earmarked funding to the OECD, and thus fall under the ‘bilateral funding’ category. France’s core contributions to multilateral education mostly comprise assessed contributions to the European Union (US$135 million in 2016) and the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA; US$39 million). In total, core contributions to multilateral aid stood at US$193 million in 2016, or 14% of France’s total education ODA.

According to the conclusions of the latest meeting of the French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) in February 2018 France will focus on: 1) Universal basic education; 2) Inclusion of youth in the workforce; 3) Women and girls’ empowerment; 4) Democratization of higher education, research, and innovation; and 5) Support for the Franco-phonie to promote the French language.

Further, the MFA’s 2017-2021 ‘Strategy for France’s external action for education, vocational training, and inclusion in developing countries’ emphasizes education programs with professional training and a linkage to the labor market.

Investments in education, alongside areas such as health and agriculture, are viewed by the government as contributing to the stabilization of the Sahel region. Investments in that region focus on employability through education and training, with a view to strengthening the links between education, employability, and security.

According to the OECD, education is the largest sector of France’s bilateral ODA; it received US$1.2 billion or 15% of bilateral funding in 2017 (latest year for which bilateral data is available). This includes the high in-country student costs mentioned above. If these costs are excluded, bilateral education financing drops to US$385 million. In-country student costs also distort the picture of

Further information: ‘basic’ and ‘general’ education

In this profile, ‘basic education’ refers to the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) sector code ‘basic education’ (112), which includes primary education, basic skills for youths and adults, and early childhood education. ‘General education’ refers to the OECD CRS sector code ‘education, level unspecified’, which includes education policy and administrative management, education facilities and training, teacher training, and educational research.

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France’s funding priorities within education. Almost three quarters of France’s bilateral education ODA is spent on post-secondary education (US$895 million in 2017). Nearly all of this consists of costs associated with students from developing countries studying in France. Secondary education is the second-largest sub-sector, with funding at US$125 million, or 10%, in 2017. As secondary and post-secondary education are considered important in supporting youth employability and in turn strengthening the economy – a key priority of France’s development policy – it is likely funding to these sub-sectors will increase going forward.

Smaller shares of France’s bilateral funding for education are invested in ‘general education’ (US$52 million, or 4% in 2017), which includes activities aimed at strengthening education systems. ‘Basic education’, which includes primary education, accounts for 7% of France’s bilateral education ODA.

The MAE defines overarching priorities; AFD steers implementation

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAE), the Directorate-General for Globalization, Culture, Education and International Development (DGM) and its ‘Sub-Directorate for Human Development’ drive strategies relating to France’s global education policies. The MAE is responsible for the allocation of resources to education ODA channeled through multilateral organizations and provides political guidance on the priorities of France’s bilateral education ODA. This is particularly true for programs implemented by the AFD. AFD is responsible for the implementation and design of education projects in partner countries. The ‘Education, Training and Employment’ division of the ‘Human Development’ department is the most relevant operational division. The Ministry of Education is involved in global education, insofar as it manages and reports costs of hosting international students.
FRANCE’S ODA TO EDUCATION
US$ millions

![Graph showing ODA to Education from 2014 to 2016]

- Multilateral education ODA
- Bilateral education ODA
- Education ODA as % of total ODA

OECD CRS, and imputed multilateral contributions to the education sector: DAC secretariat estimations. In 2017 prices.

FRANCE’S BILATERAL ODA TO EDUCATION ACROSS SUB-SECTORS, 2017
Total: US$1249 million

- General education: 4.2% (US$52m.)
- Basic education: 6.6% (US$80m.)
- Vocational training: 7.6% (US$95.4m.)
- Secondary education: 10.0% (US$124.6m.)
- Post-secondary education: 71.7% (US$895.4m.)

OECD CRS. In 2017 prices.
TOP 10 DAC DONORS TO EDUCATION, 2016

Total education ODA; US$ millions; in 2017 prices; incl. bilateral and multilateral funding

- Germany: 2,934
- United States: 1,880
- United Kingdom: 1,571
- France: 1,357
- Japan: 737
- Norway: 425
- Korea: 278
- Canada: 274
- Australia: 273
- Italy: 234

OECD CRS and imputed multilateral contributions to the education sector (DAC Secretariat estimates)

TOP 10 DAC DONORS TO EDUCATION, 2016

Education ODA as % of total ODA

- New Zealand: 15.7
- Portugal: 14.8
- Luxembourg: 14.3
- Hungary: 12.9
- Slovenia: 12
- Korea: 11.4
- France: 11.2
- Austria: 11
- Poland: 9.3
- Norway: 9.3

OECD CRS and imputed multilateral contributions to the education sector (DAC Secretariat estimates)