Japan is the 5th-largest donor to education; education for women and girls increasingly a focus

Japan is the fifth-largest donor country to education, contributing US$737 million in official development assistance (ODA) flows to this sector in 2016 (the latest year for which complete data is available), according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data. In relative terms, Japan ranked 21st out of members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries in 2016, allocating 5% of its total ODA to education. This is below the OECD average of 8%.

Some countries report costs of scholarships and other tuition costs of hosting students from developing countries as ODA. Although reportable as ODA, they do not constitute transnational financial flows. If we exclude these costs, Japan becomes a larger donor. It ranked fourth among the 29 DAC donor countries in absolute terms, overtaking France, which disbursed over half its bilateral education ODA for such scholarships and tuition costs in 2016. Japan spent 29% of its bilateral education ODA on in-country student costs in 2017 (the latest year for which bilateral ODA data is available).

Total spending in the education sector has declined over time, from a peak of US$1,050 million in 2011 to US$762 million in 2016, a decrease of 38%.

Japan’s long-term development policy document, the ‘Development Cooperation Charter’, lists education as a prerequisite for quality growth, along with healthcare, women’s empowerment, quality water and sanitation, food and nutrition, and lower inequality. Education was also listed as a priority in Japan’s fiscal year (FY) 2017 ‘Priority Policy for International Cooperation’, in which Japan’s development priorities for the FY are defined. The policy priorities for FY2017 (April 2017 to March 2018) are divided into three key areas. Within one of the three policy priorities ‘Addressing global issues toward achieving the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals] and promoting human security’, education is listed as one of six areas Japan will promote cooperation in.

During the United Nations (UN) ‘High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs in July 2017, former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida announced Japan will contribute US$1 billion by March 2019 to achieve the SDGs. This includes Japan’s contributions to women’s empowerment and education.

Japan’s bilateral ODA focuses on post-secondary education and gender equality

Japan’s bilateral education ODA makes up a large and increasing portion of total education ODA. It stood at US$559 million in 2017, an increase from US$541 million in 2016.

Half of Japan’s bilateral education ODA in 2017 was allocated to programs in post-secondary education (51%, US$286 million). Half of this (US$153 million) of this funding was for costs of scholarships and fees to support students from developing countries studying in Japan. 29% (US$163 million) of Japan’s bilateral education ODA in 2017 went to general education system strengthening. This comprised spending on education facilities and training, teacher training, and educational research.

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.

During its G7 presidency in 2016, Japan announced the ‘Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’, which focuses on women’s empowerment through promoting women’s rights and supporting female leadership. As part of this initiative, Japan supported a training program for 5,000 female officials and professionals and is working towards improving access to quality education for 50,000 female students between 2016 and 2018. The G7 commitment also included enhancing education for 20,000 people in the Middle East with the purpose of preventing instability caused by youth unemployment. Since 2014, Japan has hosted the annual World Assembly for Woman (WAW!). The 2019 WAW! was held concurrently with the Woman 20 (W20) as part of Japan’s presidency of the G20.
port for primary education. Japan contributed US$29.8 million to the GPE since joining in 2008. They have pledged US$5.0 million for the 2018-2020 pledge.

These funding shares largely reflect the priorities outlined in Japan’s new education strategy ‘Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth - Achieving Quality Education through Mutual Learning’, which Japan developed in the context of the SDGs in 2015. The three priority areas are:

1. Achieving “inclusive, equitable and quality learning”. This entails collaboration with partner countries on education to support the establishment of self-reliant and inclusive (especially for girls and other disadvantaged groups) education systems.

2. “Industrial, science & technology human resource development and sustainable social economic development”. Japan aims at supporting the full education cycle from primary to secondary to higher education.

3. Establishing and expanding an “international/regional network for educational cooperation”. This includes promoting South-South cooperation and collaboration with international organizations, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) or the UN’s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Over a third of bilateral education ODA goes to Asia (38% in 2017), which is in line with the general focus of Japan’s development assistance in the region.

The second-largest recipient region is sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which received 17% of all education ODA in 2017. Assistance to countries in SSA could increase in the coming years due to funding flows resulting from commitments made as part of the 2016 Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in Kenya. TICAD is a conference organized by the Japanese government to promote Africa’s development.

At the seventh TICAD VII in Yokohama in August 2019, Prime Minister Abe stressed Japan’s commitment to working closely with the African continent and encouraged the Japanese private sector to continue to invest in Africa.

Although additional funding pledges were not made by Japan during TICAD7, the TICAD bond was issued in September 2019 as a Japan International Cooperation Agency bond (JICA bond, FILP agency bond) that uses the funds procured for social development projects in African countries.

**MOFA sets priorities for education; JICA formulates bilateral education projects**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), led by Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu, sets priorities for education, in consultation with other ministries. Within MOFA, the International Cooperation Bureau leads policy design and ODA budget development. The Bureau’s Global Issues Cooperation Division is responsible for multilateral and some sector policies including education.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), led by Education Minister Koichi Hagiuda, mostly manages the costs associated with students from developing countries studying in Japan. The Japan Agency for International Cooperation (JICA) department for Human Development is also involved in education project formulation, especially related to bilateral funding.
JAPAN'S ODA TO EDUCATION

US$ millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Multilateral education ODA (%)</th>
<th>Bilateral education ODA (%)</th>
<th>Education ODA as % of total ODA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

JAPAN'S BILATERAL ODA TO EDUCATION ACROSS SUB-SECTORS, 2017

Total: US$559 million

- Post-secondary education: 51.3% (US$286m.)
- General education: 29.2% (US$163m.)
- Basic education: 10.2% (US$57m.)
- Vocational training: 7.0% (US$39m.)
- Secondary education: 2.3% (US$13m.)

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: 2.294
United States: 1.980
United Kingdom: 1.571
France: 1.357
Japan: 737
Norway: 426
Korea: 278
Canada: 274
Australia: 273
Italy: 234

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

TOP 25 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: 12.0
Korea: 11.2
France: 11.0
Austria: 11.0
Poland: 11.0
Norway: 9.5
United Kingdom: 9.5
Slovak Republic: 8.9
Germany: 8.3
Australia: 8.3
Ireland: 7.8
Czech Republic: 6.8
Canada: 6.6
Finland: 6.4
Belgium: 5.4
United States: 4.7
Japan: 4.5
Switzerland: 4.5
Sweden: 4.4
Norway: 4.3
Italy: 4.1
Netherlands: 3.8

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