



Education annual thematic performance report 2007-08

November 2008

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For further more information about the Australian Government's international development program, contact:

Communications Section

AusAID

GPO Box 887

Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6206 4000

Facsimile (02) 6206 4880

Internet www.ausaid.gov.au

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Preface

This report provides an assessment of the education development assistance Australia delivered in 2007–08. It **reviews progress made towards the objectives in *Better education: a policy for Australian development assistance in education***, published in May 2007. It therefore provides an assessment of performance one year after the objectives were set. The overall objective of Australian education development assistance is 'to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development by giving more girls and boys in the Asia-Pacific region a better education'. During 2007–08 there was a change in government in Australia and aid policy is currently being reviewed.

This report **focuses on basic and vocational education**. It does not include an assessment of support for tertiary education, core contributions to the World Bank and UNICEF or Australia's scholarship programs. AusAID spent approximately \$150 million on scholarships in 2007–08, compared with about \$200 million on basic and vocational education through bilateral programs.

This report has been prepared by the Education Thematic Group, an internal policy, advisory and management team based in Canberra. The group was established at the beginning of 2007–08. A draft of this report was peer reviewed by specialists selected by the Education Thematic Group.

Caution—a word about numbers

Figures presented in this report should be interpreted with caution.

Unless otherwise indicated, education statistics are taken from the UNESCO 2008 Global Monitoring Report, *Education for All by 2015: will we make it?* UNESCO relies on information provided by national governments. Information management is weak in many countries and statistics are sometimes inaccurate or unavailable. National figures often mask significant within-country variation.

Information is also drawn from AusAID reports, including country and activity reports. These are usually based on peer-reviewed self-assessments. AusAID's management information system currently provides limited sectoral data, which constrained the preparation of this report.

Both UNESCO and AusAID sources are particularly limited on qualitative information.

Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	non-government organisation
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Summary

Many countries are making historically unprecedented progress towards achieving the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- > Since 2000 the number of children in primary school worldwide has risen from 647 million to 688 million.
- > There are now 24 million fewer children of primary school age out of school than in 1999.
- > Many countries that started from a low base have made significant progress towards achieving the education MDGs but will not achieve the goal of universal primary education and gender equality in education within the MDG timeframe.

Most countries view universal basic education—early childhood, primary and junior secondary schooling, and adult literacy—and the promotion of further education as important policy objectives. But enabling all people to achieve basic learning outcomes requires deeply entrenched and mutually reinforcing inequalities to be addressed.

- > Progress towards universal primary education and the increasing demand for higher order skills are highlighting the importance and demand for secondary, vocational and higher education.
- > Globally about 250 million young people of secondary school age are not in school.

Australia is on track to at least partly achieve, by 2010, all of the objectives identified in the policy document *Better education: a policy for Australian development assistance in education*, published in May 2007.

- > More girls and boys in the Asia-Pacific region are accessing better education services.
- > The governance of national education systems is improving, services are delivered more effectively and specific regional needs are met.
- > Australian aid is being delivered more effectively.

AusAID strengthened its capacity to deliver education aid effectively by, for example:

- > establishing the Education Thematic Group, a policy, advisory and management team based in AusAID Canberra
- > designing an Education Resource Facility to provide rapid access to leading international expertise in education and development.

Education in Asia and the Pacific— an overview

Many countries are making historically unprecedented progress towards universal primary education (MDG 2). Since 2000 the number of children in primary school worldwide has risen from 647 million to 688 million. There are now 24 million fewer children of primary school age out of school and 73 million more young people enrolled in secondary schools than in 1999. While the MDG 3 target of gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005 has been missed, many countries in Asia and the Pacific have recorded reduced gender disparities.

Substantial, sustainable improvements in education outcomes occur only with the combined effort of several partners over many years. Malaysia took 30 years to increase net enrolment in primary education from 88 per cent (1970) to 98 per cent (2000). Indonesia took 30 years to increase primary net enrolment from 72 per cent (1975) to 91 per cent (2005) and 10 years to increase lower secondary net enrolment from 50 per cent (1995) to 62 per cent (2005).

Despite progress, at least 72 million children of primary school age are not in school, of whom 26 million live in Asia and the Pacific. Of these, about 17 million live in South and West Asia, and about 16 million are girls. While a significant proportion of out-of-school children have never been to school, the majority have enrolled but then dropped out.

Worldwide, there are about 765 million adults without basic literacy skills, the majority being poor, rural women. This has an intergenerational effect, as children of illiterate parents are less likely to go to school and less likely to achieve basic competencies.

Even in those countries closest to achieving universal primary education, there is much ‘unfinished business’. As Table 1 illustrates, progress in Asia and the Pacific has varied. In Asia the countries closest to enabling all children to complete primary education by 2015 include Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. In the Pacific, Fiji, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have the best prospects of achieving this goal. However, to sustain and expand on progress to date, all countries need to provide educational opportunities to the most disadvantaged, improve the quality and relevance of education, and strengthen pathways to further education. This is especially challenging for countries with rising school-age populations, high inflation and slow economic growth. In the Philippines, for example, these factors are resulting in lower government spending per person, a decline in the real value of education expenditure, and a higher cost burden on families. Together, these effects make maintaining—let alone strengthening—access and quality extremely difficult.

Many countries will not achieve universal completion of primary education by 2015. In Asia, these include Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal and Pakistan. In the Pacific, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are furthest from achieving this goal. In Papua New Guinea, recent studies found that, of every 100 children aged 6–14 years, 32 were enrolled in school. Of these, only 16 complete basic education and only 4 achieve basic literacy skills. In several countries conflict, instability and other factors have resulted in the stagnation or reversal of education outcomes.

Enabling all people to achieve basic learning outcomes requires countries to address deeply entrenched and mutually reinforcing inequalities based on poverty, location, gender, disability and other factors. Disadvantage starts early, as malnutrition and ill health limit many children's cognitive development and educational attainment. In many countries being poor, rural and female creates a triple burden that is further multiplied for children from disadvantaged ethnic or caste groups. Disparities are often far greater between rich and poor than between boys and girls. Despite progress, few countries are giving adequate attention to early childhood education and to inequalities in access and school quality. In East Asia and the Pacific less than 10 per cent of children with disabilities attend school. In some countries, enrolment is as low as 1–2 per cent. Disparities at primary level remain very large, particularly in South Asia and Papua New Guinea, and are usually more severe at secondary level. Bangladesh has made rapid progress in increasing enrolment and has largely achieved gender parity in enrolment at primary and secondary levels. However, it is unlikely to achieve universal primary education unless it can overcome inequalities in education access and

Table 1: Official indicators of educational outcomes in selected countries

	Primary education			Secondary education	
	Children out of school	Net enrolment	Survival rate to last year	Gender parity	Net enrolment
	no.	%	%	ratio female to male	%
India	6 395 000	89	79	0.93	na
Pakistan	6 303 000	68	70	0.75	21
Vietnam	1 007 000	88	87	0.94	69
Nepal	702 000	79	79	0.95	na
Philippines	648 000	94	72	0.99	61
Burma	487 000	90	70	1.02	37
Thailand	419 000	88	na	0.96	64
Indonesia	414 000	96	85	0.95	58
Bangladesh	399 000	94	65	1.03	44
Laos	126 000	84	63	0.88	38
Papua New Guinea	na	na	58	0.88	na
Solomon Islands	26 000	63	na	0.95	26
Cambodia	23 000	99	57	0.98	24
East Timor	3 000	98	na	0.92	na
Tonga	3 000	95	na	0.96	68
Samoa	2 000	90	na	1.00	66
Vanuatu	2 000	94	71	0.98	39
Fiji	1 400	96	96	0.99	na
Australia	61 000	97	na	1.00	86

na Not available.

Caution: The data are as reported by governments for UNESCO, *Education for All by 2015: will we make it?*, Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO and Oxford University Press, 2008. Some countries, such as Afghanistan, reported very little or no information. Other sources suggest many of these figures are inaccurate. For example, the number of out-of-school primary-age children in Pakistan may be closer to 8–10 million and the primary school net enrolment rate 53 per cent rather than 68 per cent. Studies indicate that Bangladesh has a primary net enrolment rate of 87 per cent, a survival rate of 53 per cent and closer to 2 million children out of school. Similarly, the 2007 Philippines MDGs report indicated primary net enrolment was 84 per cent in 2005 rather than 94 per cent. National statistics mask large disparities within countries.

weaknesses in attainment that are primarily the result of household poverty.

Enabling all people to achieve basic learning outcomes requires countries to improve the quality of teaching and learning. School attendance is not enough—it is cognitive skills rather than years in school that drive social and economic development. Many countries in Asia and the Pacific have focused more on increasing access than on improving the quality of teaching and learning. In Afghanistan and Cambodia, pupil numbers have increased far faster than the number of teachers, resulting in pupil–teacher ratios (65:1 and 56:1 respectively) that are not conducive to better learning. Poor-quality education severely limits the potential benefits of education and provides a weak foundation for further learning. Increasing concern about the quality of education has prompted some countries to undertake assessments of learning achievement. In many countries the quality of education is low in core subjects such as language and mathematics. For example:

- > In Bangladesh, less than a quarter of children complete primary school with the intended competencies.
- > In India, research covering 300 000 primary schools found net enrolment rates of 90 per cent, but two-thirds of children were unable to read a simple paragraph.
- > In Vanuatu, a recent survey found that 27 per cent of year-6 students could not write a simple dictated sentence and 61 per cent of year-6 students could not write the number 3.5 million (that is, 3 500 000).
- > In Papua New Guinea, research indicates only 20–25 per cent of children who complete basic education have basic literacy skills. This is about 4–5 per cent of the age cohort.
- > In Vietnam, while overall levels of learning are improving, the disparity between high and low achievers is widening.

Progress towards universal primary education and increasing demands for higher order skills are highlighting the importance and intensifying the demand for secondary, vocational and higher education, especially in East Asia and parts of the Pacific. Post-primary education needs to expand and improve to:

- > encourage more children to complete primary education
- > increase the number and abilities of the teachers needed for universal primary education, including for children with special needs, such as linguistic minority children and those with disabilities
- > promote women's empowerment, lower rates of childbearing and better family health (One major analysis found that, in countries where few girls received secondary schooling, women had on average more than five children, of whom one or two died in infancy. In those countries where half of the girls go to secondary school, women had on average just over three children and child deaths were rarer.)
- > provide the higher levels of knowledge and skills required by labour markets
- > increase earning capacity. (Research suggests each additional year of secondary schooling can boost wages by about 5–15 per cent for boys and 10–20 per cent for girls.)

Most countries in Asia and the Pacific now view universal basic education (early childhood, primary, lower secondary, and adult literacy) as an important policy objective, rather than simply giving priority to primary education. This is placing increasing demands on countries, particularly for additional financing and managerial, administrative and teaching capacities. National and regional disparities at the secondary level are often even more pronounced than those at the primary level.

Vocational education and training are increasingly vital to prepare young people for decent and productive work (MDG 8 target). The expansion of secondary education is resulting in countries redefining how they address increasingly diverse student interests and societal needs, with skill development key to addressing national competitiveness and youth unemployment and disaffection. However, while countries such as Indonesia and Papua New Guinea have increased the priority given to vocational education, enrolment rates remain low and the relationship between school and work weak.

Worldwide, with about 250 million young people of secondary school age not in school, there is a growing prospect that a lack of access to secondary and vocational education will deepen inequalities. In much of Asia and the Pacific, young people who do not go to secondary school are overwhelmingly poor, from rural areas or otherwise disadvantaged. Many face great difficulties in securing decent and productive work. In many countries gender disparities are greater in secondary education, and vocational education is highly sex segregated, contributing to workforce inequalities. The most disadvantaged, such as people with disabilities, often find it impossible to secure employment without prior training.

Achievement of policy objectives

This chapter assesses the degree of progress during 2007–08 towards achieving the policy objectives for Australia's education development assistance. **The 2007 Better education policy identified three objectives for Australia's education development assistance.** These objectives, to be achieved by 2010–11, together with the policy's monitoring indicators are presented in Table 2. The indicators were developed in anticipation of a mid-term policy review, following their publication in May 2007, rather than an annual assessment.

Table 2: Better education objectives and monitoring indicators

Objectives	Monitoring indicators
1. More girls and boys in the Asia-Pacific region are accessing better education services	Enrolment rates at primary and secondary school levels Gender parity at all levels of education Completion rates at primary and secondary school levels Literacy rates in all age groups
2. The governance of national education systems is improving, services are delivered more effectively and specific regional needs are met	Education financing including public expenditure, private financing and aid flows within the sector Public sector management in terms of the quality of regulatory policy, public administration and financial management, and the implementation of anticorruption measures School management , especially in terms of the proportion of schools with functioning local management committees Efficiency measures such as the student-teacher ratio, the proportion of qualified teachers in the teaching force and the results of national and international testing Program outputs such as the number of teachers whose English language skills have been upgraded, the number of Islamic schools with demonstrable quality enhancements, or the number of students completing a vocational and technical education qualification
3. Australian aid is being delivered more effectively	Funding levels encompassing all Australian aid flows to education Policy coherence between aid program policies (especially education, gender and anticorruption), AusAID country strategies and whole-of-government policy Impact of individual initiatives in line with the Australian aid effectiveness reporting tool Approach in terms of the alignment of Australian support with partner government priorities and plans, donor harmonisation and whole-of-government involvement

Objective 1:

More girls and boys in the Asia-Pacific region are accessing better education services

Rating

Available evidence suggests this objective is on track to be at least partly achieved.

Assessment of performance and results

The *Better education* policy document gives a specific target for this objective:

... to assist developing countries by 2010 to increase by 10 million the number of children attending school and to improve the quality of education for an additional 50 million children. (p. 7)

Quantifying annual progress towards the achievement of this objective is confounded by the lack of annual success criteria, the short timeframe compared with the feasible pace of change, and limitations in information and reporting systems. There is also a need to clarify the approach to attribution to be adopted in performance reports.

The Better education target is ambitious, given Australia's geographical focus includes many countries with relatively small school-age populations.

There is evidence that more girls and boys in many countries in Asia and the Pacific are accessing better education and that Australia is contributing to these changes. Examples follow.

- > In 2007–08 the Australia–Pacific Technical College was established with campuses in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu. More than 500 students were enrolled in courses linked to labour market demand. The establishment of the campuses has reduced the need for students to travel outside the Pacific to gain internationally recognised qualifications. The college is also delivering a standard of service that has established benchmarks for other vocational education providers, which is strengthening domestic capacities. In time it is expected that evidence will emerge of increases in employment, income (including remittances) and productivity as a result of graduate participation in both national and international labour markets.
- > In 2007–08 Australia supported the development and dissemination of about one million textbooks to schools throughout Asia and the Pacific. The impact of this is yet to be evaluated. However, a conservative assumption that each textbook has at least a three-year life and is used by at least two students suggests at least 6 million children will benefit.
- > In 2007–08 Australia provided funding that enabled the construction of more than 380 primary and junior secondary schools in Indonesia, the installation of clean water and sanitation systems in more than 500 schools in Laos, and the distribution of grants for facility maintenance to more than 2000 primary schools in Papua New Guinea. International education research has shown that student attendance, behaviour and achievement improve with better facilities and school buildings. As a result, Australian assistance is likely to contribute to more students accessing better education services, with millions benefiting in Indonesia and thousands benefiting in Laos and Papua New Guinea.

Objective 2:

The governance of national education systems is improving, services are delivered more effectively and specific regional needs are met

Rating

Available evidence suggests this objective can be met.

Assessment of performance and results

Australian development assistance for education provides support for countries to improve the governance of national education systems and the provision of education services. The *Better education* policy also prioritises three specific regional needs: vocational and technical training, Islamic schooling and English language skills.

There is evidence Australia's assistance is contributing to the efforts of many partner countries to improve their education governance and to deliver education more effectively. Australian support in 2007–08 contributed to the following.

- > More than 9000 teachers and government officials in partner countries received training to improve their skills, knowledge and capacity to deliver education. This is expected to result in better planning, teaching and school management.
- > The strengthening of teacher training providers, including the Institute for Indigenous People's Education in the Philippines and faculties of education in seven Islamic universities in Indonesia. This is ensuring teacher training programs are continuously improved and that there are relevant curriculum materials and training courses available for teachers.
- > Policy development and systemic reform included:
 - curriculum development and in-service training in Papua New Guinea and Fiji, to enhance the quality and relevance of education for students and the skills of teachers
 - educational planning in Laos and Nauru, leading to more evidence-based sector financing and decision making
 - the development of a national school-based management model in the Philippines, improving the day-to-day functioning of schools and strengthening relations between schools and local communities.

In addition to providing bilateral support to partner countries in Asia and the Pacific, Australia is supporting global improvements in education. Australia is a donor member of the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative and has committed \$40 million over four years to this partnership. In 2007–08 the initiative allocated more than US\$249 million to six countries (Benin, Cambodia, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone) to accelerate progress towards universal primary education. While it is too early to report on achievements from this investment, emerging results from earlier contributions include:

- > in Nicaragua, an additional 70 000 6 years olds in school
- > in Niger, recruitment of an additional 3200 teachers
- > in Vietnam, better school attendance of ethnic minorities, particularly girls
- > in Kenya, the provision of 18 000 primary school operations grants and textbook grants
- > in Yemen, more female teachers, which is helping to get more girls into school.

As a prominent development partner in the education sector in Laos, Australia is playing a lead role, along with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in supporting the government to seek endorsement and access to additional financial support through the Fast Track Initiative. As a member country, Australia also provides substantial core funding to the World Bank and UNICEF for expenditure on education programs delivered all over the world.

Australian education development assistance is helping countries to address inequalities and to respond to emergencies. In Aceh, Australian assistance has provided teachers with additional training to work with children who have been adversely affected by conflict and the tsunami in December 2006. In Burma, education assistance was rapidly increased (along with other humanitarian assistance) following the 2008 cyclone. Training and materials were also provided to teachers working in non-government schools in the poorest parts of Indonesia, Bangladesh, Laos, Pakistan and the Philippines.

Progress was made in line with the three specific regional needs identified in *Better education*. In Vanuatu a competitive employment and training fund was established to provide more responsive training to assist people in rural and informal sectors into income-earning work. In East Timor a school-based employment and skills development program was supported to increase employment outcomes for young people. In Pakistan, Tonga and Kiribati, Australia provided technical advice to government on strategic reforms in vocational education and training.

Support was provided to Islamic schools in Indonesia and the Philippines but plans to work with *madrassah* in South Asia were not progressed. Research commissioned by AusAID revealed Australian aid could not have an impact on the quality of education in any more than a very small fraction of Islamic schools, and that this would not necessarily contribute to better education in South Asia.

English language training was a component of support for teacher training in the Pacific and Indonesia. A scoping study examined options to support English language development in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam but, following the new Australian government decision to review aid policy, it was decided not to proceed with program development.

Objective 3: Australian aid is being delivered more effectively

Rating

Progress to date suggests this objective can be largely achieved.

This rating is based on an assessment of four indicators of progress in the *Better education* policy monitoring framework (see Table 2)—total aid spent on education, policy coherence, impact as reported by program managers, and approach.

Assessment of performance and results

Total aid spent on education

In 2007–08 the Australian Government invested about \$200 million in basic and vocational education through bilateral and regional programs, and the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (Table 3). This accounted for 8 per cent of total official development assistance compared with a mean of 10.7 per cent for other major bilateral donors. Additional funds have been provided to the World Bank and UNICEF for education development assistance.

Table 3: Estimated AusAID expenditure on education in 2007–08, by country or regional program

Program	Expenditure
	\$m
Afghanistan	0.2
Bangladesh	8.4
Burma	1.0
China	0.5
East Timor	6.2
Fiji	4.5
Global	4.2

Program	Expenditure
Indonesia	64.2
Kiribati	0.8
Laos	4.0
Nauru	1.1
Nepal	1.6
Pacific regional	35.7
Pakistan	1.1
Papua New Guinea	29.9
Philippines	30.7
Samoa	0.5
Tonga	0.05
Vanuatu	4.6
Total	199.25

Note: Includes expenditure on primary, secondary and vocational education, as well as spending defined as system strengthening. It does not include expenditure on tertiary education, program development, core funding contributions to multilateral banks and UN organisations, and scholarships.

Australia spent 41 per cent of its education development assistance in 2007–08 in East Asia and 31 per cent in the Pacific. Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Bangladesh were the largest bilateral recipients, accounting for two-thirds of the \$199.25 million invested.

A considerable portion of spending, almost 40 per cent, was on quality inputs for government schools, including maintaining and building school infrastructure, school grant programs and training for teachers and school committee members. Other assistance focused on helping partner governments to develop their capacity and systems to function effectively, and on non-government providers of education services such as BRAC in Bangladesh.

About 50 per cent of education development assistance was spent directly on basic education, with spending on vocational and technical education increasing from 10 per cent in 2006–07 to 25 per cent. Other expenditure was focused on sector-wide system reform. On the basis of current reporting, the percentage of funds spent on technical assistance and aid management expenses cannot be disaggregated.

In the Pacific (not including Papua New Guinea), Australia spent \$35.7 million on regional education programs and \$11.6 million bilaterally. Of this \$47.3 million, about 75 per cent was on vocational education and about 25 per cent on basic education. If scholarships and higher education are included, Australia invested a total of \$60.8 million in 2007–08, of which 17 per cent was devoted to basic education.

Australia has improved the predictability of its education assistance. In the past, Australian education assistance fluctuated in terms of total, regional and bilateral flows, and funding to specific education subsectors. However, the predictability of Australian education assistance was improved through a four-year \$540 million multi-country budget allocation announced in the 2007–08 Australian aid budget. This has facilitated multi-year funding commitments with governments in East Timor, Nepal and the Philippines, with UNICEF in Bangladesh and Burma, and with the World Bank as the trustee of the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative.

Predictable aid flows are especially important for education systems in aid-dependent countries, as they allow partner governments to make more strategic use of funds by integrating them into longer term sector expenditure planning. Further improvement in the

predictability of bilateral education assistance is expected to result from the establishment of long-term Partnerships for Development with Pacific countries, beginning with Samoa and Papua New Guinea in 2008.

Policy coherence

There have been significant improvements in policy coherence, both within AusAID and across government. The framework provided by the 2006 Australian white paper on aid and the development of a suite of new aid policies in 2007 strengthened coherence between Australian aid policies on education, gender, health and anti-corruption.

The relationship between AusAID and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations strengthened in 2007–08. The department provided input to the new policy for Australian education development assistance, while AusAID supported Pacific delegates to attend a meeting organised by the department on establishing a regional recognition system for higher education qualifications. AusAID benefited from the secondment of a vocational education specialist from the department.

There is coherence between the 14 key areas of support outlined in the policy and areas of support identified in country strategies produced in 2007–08. However, there remain significant challenges to achieving policy coherence, including coherence between:

- > policy and country program strategies. Coherence between policy and strategies would be strengthened by better analysis of the education sector in country strategies. This could include examination of the impact of progress or the lack of progress at different levels of education (early childhood, primary, secondary, vocational, technical and higher education) and on the achievement of overall education outcomes.
- > approaches to planning, monitoring and evaluation. Different parts of AusAID and different development agencies use a range of data sources and planning and monitoring processes. This contributes to divergent analyses and greater transaction costs for countries and development agencies. AusAID and the World Bank agreed to co-fund a regional conference on harmonising monitoring and evaluation for better education in the Pacific in July 2008. There was a small increase in the number of joint donor missions involving AusAID in 2007–08 but challenges remain in undertaking joint analysis, improving the consistency of reporting and sharing information.

Impact as reported by program managers

There is significant variation in the number of activities and spending levels by country. In 2007–08 education investment was delivered through 39 initiatives (such as sector support, projects, facilities and trust funds), primarily in 17 countries in Asia and the Pacific, and through the Pacific regional and global programs (Table 4 and Figure 2). This is a concentration in both the number of activities and the number of partner countries, within a spending increase of about \$25 million on the 2006–07 level.

Table 4: Estimated expenditure on basic and vocational education activities implemented in 2007–08 by country or region

Expenditure in 2007–08	Name of initiative
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	Expenditure in 2007–08	Name of initiative
	\$m	
Country program		
Afghanistan	0.2	English Language Training for Afghan Gov. Officers Health Education in Oruzgan
Bangladesh	8.4	Bangladesh English Language Teacher Training UNICEF Education Initiative BRAC Education Initiative
Burma	1.0	UNICEF—Improving access to quality basic education
China	0.5	Chongqing Vocational Education and Training
East Timor	6.2	Vocational Education Program
Fiji	4.5	Fiji Education Sector Program
Indonesia	64.2	NTT Primary Education Partnership Education Sector Program Development Basic Education Program Aceh Education Sector Development Papua Education Sector Development Kang Guru Radio English Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools
Kiribati	0.8	Support for Human Resource Development
Laos	4.0	Access to Basic Education in Laos Delivering Better Education in Laos
Nauru	1.1	Nauru Education and Training
Nepal	1.6	Education Sector Support
Pakistan	1.1	Pakistan Vocational & Technical Education Program Balochistan Basic Education
Papua New Guinea	29.9	Education Capacity Building Program Basic Education Development Project Sport For Development Initiative
Philippines	30.7	Basic Education Sector Reform Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao Strengthen Implementation of Visayas Education
Samoa	0.5	Samoa Distance Education Program Samoa ESPII Implementation
Tonga	0.05	Tonga Distance Education
Vanuatu	4.6	Secondary Schools Extension—Phase 2 Technical & Vocational Education and Training
Regional program		
Pacific	35.7	Pacific Teacher Effectiveness Study South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment Australia Pacific Technical College
Global	4.2	Commonwealth of Learning Open Learning Forum Education For All – Fast Track Initiative

Note: Program planning and other administrative initiatives have been excluded. Funding provided to the World Bank and UNICEF is not included in this table.

Satisfaction in terms of quality at implementation has declined. Reports by AusAID program managers for 31 of the 39 education activities implemented in 2007–08 rated 80 per cent of activities as satisfactory or higher in terms of the overall quality of implementation

(Table 5). This is a decrease from 96 per cent in 2006–07. This decrease is significant but scores over a longer period are needed to determine a trend.

Table 5: Satisfaction ratings in quality-at-implementation reports in 2007–08

Implementation progress	Achieving objectives	Monitoring & evaluation	Sustainability
95%	88%	78%	85%

Approach

Australia's commitment to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is beginning to be demonstrated in the education sector. Of the 12 progress indicators in the declaration, more than half focus on alignment of donor practices with partner country objectives, systems and procedures, and the degree of harmonisation and coordination between donors. In 2007–08 Australia made greater efforts to align its practices with these indicators. For example, in Indonesia and the Philippines AusAID made greater use of joint analysis and channelled an increased percentage of funding through country systems.

Australia spends about 50 per cent of its development assistance in fragile states. This is the highest proportion of any OECD country. This poses a particular challenge as institutional and professional capacities are often particularly weak, limiting full adherence to all of the Paris Declaration indicators.

In countries where Australian education development assistance is not being delivered in line with international aid effectiveness indicators, such as in China, Fiji and Tonga, this is explained partly by older projects (designed before the Paris Declaration was established) being completed. In other countries, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, Australian education development assistance is being provided through other development partners, such as UNICEF.

Using country procurement systems may not always be feasible. However, this has not negated the need to collaborate effectively with other development partners on, for example, joint approaches to analysis, fieldwork and capacity strengthening, or to ensuring that funding, even if not channelled through country systems, is aligned with a national education plan.

Strengthening Australia's capacity to deliver education development assistance

In 2007–08 AusAID acted to strengthen its capacity to deliver education aid more effectively. Examples follow.

Policy

- > Disseminating the 2007 *Better education* policy to guide the development of Australian development assistance for education.
- > Designing an Education Resource Facility to provide rapid access to leading international expertise in education and development.
- > Developing an action framework to assist country programs to improve technical and vocational education and training.
- > Initiating new education research, including a study of the total unit cost of educating a student in Papua New Guinea, a review of Australian support for Islamic schools in Indonesia, the Philippines and South Asia, and a study of policy implementation in Australian education development assistance.

Partnerships

- > Strengthening cooperation with other agencies (for example, the World Bank, NZAID, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the European Union and UNICEF) in country, as a member of the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative and with international education networks, which include:
 - International Network on Education in Emergencies
 - Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS and Education
 - International Institute of Education Planning
 - International Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development.
- > Liaising with non-government organisations on the possible establishment of an Australian NGO consortium on education and development.

People

- > Establishing the Education Thematic Group—a policy, advisory and management team based in AusAID Canberra.
- > Establishing the education thematic network, which now has 111 staff members in 19 countries—about 50 per cent with full-time responsibility for education.
- > Promoting a stronger focus on professional development, including through an inaugural thematic network conference and a network needs assessment.
- > Appointing education advisers in Dhaka (for South Asia), Manila, Port Moresby and Canberra (three advisers one of whom specialises in vocational education).
- > Initiating the appointment of an education adviser for the Pacific.

Table 6: Distribution of AusAID education network members, education advisers and full-time equivalent staff working on education in 2007–08

Country or region	Overseas-based members	Canberra-based members	Total network	Staff working on education ^a	Education advisers
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Country or region	Overseas-based members	Canberra-based members	Total network	Staff working on education ^a	Education advisers
Indonesia	13	5	18	21	1
Pacific	16	5	21	10	0
Thematic group	0	8	8	8	3
Papua New Guinea	6	2	8	6	1
South Asia	7	4	11	4.1	1
Philippines	5	3	8	4	1
Pakistan & Afghanistan	1	2	3	3.5	0
Mekong	1	4	5	3	0
Program enabling	0	25	25	2.5	0
East Timor	1	1	2	1.5	0
North Asia	1	1	2	0.1	0
Total	51	60	111	63.7	7

^a Full-time equivalent. Excludes staff working on scholarships programs.

Note: Many education network members are not exclusively focused on education. For example, most of the overseas-based members in the Pacific and South Asia have multi-sector responsibilities.

From a thematic perspective, education staff are unevenly distributed compared with program complexity and scale (Table 6). The Philippines, Laos and Papua New Guinea have a relatively small number of staff, particularly senior staff, given the volume and complexity of their education programs. In the Pacific, responsibilities are shared between many managers and administrators, most working only part time on education, based in seven countries. AusAID offices in the Pacific have contracted technical advice from a range of external sources, with implications for knowledge management, and the quality and consistency of advice. South Asia, and Pakistan and the Middle East have few staff in the region dedicated to the delivery of aid, including education development assistance, relative to the scale and complexity of the challenges faced.

AusAID is increasingly adopting new ways of delivering education development assistance. Over the past 12 months, AusAID has become involved in a number of multi-partner arrangements aimed at accelerating progress towards education outcomes. For example, this year Australia joined the Poverty Reduction Support Operation Program in Laos and has taken on a lead role, including co-chairing the Education and Gender Working Group, supporting the government to develop a multi-donor sector-wide approach.

Given the increasing complexity of AusAID's engagement in education, there is a need and demand for professional development and expertise. New ways of working require new knowledge and competencies. For AusAID to engage effectively in partnerships, staff need:

- > knowledge of education systems and partners' policies and procedures
- > capacity to engage and negotiate with governments, development partners and others
- > to be able to make the best use of appropriate technical support.

The needs assessment of education network training found a strong demand for opportunities to strengthen general skills in program development and management, sector knowledge and cross-country learning.