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# Preface

This annual thematic performance report provides an assessment of Australian education development assistance delivered in the 2008–09 financial year. It does not include an assessment of Australia's scholarship programs and other support for higher education.

The report was prepared by AusAID's Education Thematic Group, an internal policy, advisory and management team based in Canberra. A consultation draft was peer reviewed by specialists selected by the group.

Unless otherwise indicated, education statistics are taken from the UNESCO 2009 and 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Reports.<sup>1</sup> 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. For a majority of countries, the most current comprehensive data available is from 2006.

Information is also drawn from AusAID reports, including country and activity reports. These are usually based on peer-reviewed self-assessments and include the annual program performance reports for country and regional programs, quality-at-entry reports, quality-at-implementation reports and quality-at-completion reports prepared as part of the compliance process for initiatives funded in the education sector in 2008–09 (excluding scholarships).

Independent evaluations of Australia's aid program were also analysed when this report was being prepared. These included mid-term reviews of programs, independent completion reports for initiatives that were concluded during the reporting period, and the independent evaluation of Australia's education aid programs in Laos and Papua New Guinea commissioned by AusAID's Office of Development Effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, *Overcoming inequality: why governance matters*, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, UNESCO Publishing & Oxford University Press, Paris, 2008, viewed 11 October 2009, <<http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/reports/2009-governance/>>; UNESCO, *Reaching the marginalized*, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, UNESCO Publishing & Oxford University Press, Paris, 2010, viewed 20 January 2010 <<http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/reports/2010-marginalization/>>

# Acronyms

<b>AIPRD</b>	<b>Australia Indonesia Program for Reconstruction and Development</b>
<b>AusAID</b>	<b>Australian Agency for International Development</b>
<b>EFA</b>	<b>Education for All</b>
<b>FTI</b>	<b>Fast Track Initiative</b>
<b>MDGs</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>NZAID</b>	<b>New Zealand Agency for International Development</b>
<b>OECD</b>	<b>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</b>
<b>PPD</b>	<b>Pacific Partnership for Development</b>
<b>TVET</b>	<b>technical and vocational education and training</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations Children's Fund</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>

# Summary

This is the third annual review of Australia's support to education under the aid program. It comes at a time when Australia has made education a flagship of the aid program. Support to education (including scholarships) increased by 40% from 2007-08 to 2008-09, to a total of \$503 million. Australia's support to education is expected to grow markedly in coming years to become the aid program's largest sector.

This report reviews progress and challenges in education globally. It then draws on international experience and Australian aid performance data in 2008-09 to review the performance and quality of the education program with a particular focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in East Timor and the Pacific.

Despite significant progress in education, challenges remain. Globally at least 72 million children of primary school age and 250 million of secondary school age are not in school. Worldwide there are about 759 million adults without basic literacy skills, the majority being poor, rural women. Inadequate quality severely limits the potential benefits of education and does not provide a sound foundation for further learning. 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, strengthen education governance and improve learning achievements.

Throughout 2008-09, Australia supported countries to increase the number of girls and boys in school, improve the curriculum, support teacher training and improve the school environment by, for example, constructing and renovating schools. Support for TVET was also a significant component of Australia's education assistance program. Demand for TVET support has grown consistently in recent years and is likely to remain a priority for many countries and governments as youth populations expand. Australia's support for TVET is yielding some valuable lessons for improving program performance.<sup>2</sup>

To enhance the reach and impact of assistance in the education sector, Australia is working through an increasing range of partnerships. These include multilateral arrangements with United Nations agencies, the World Bank and other donors. The Pacific Partnerships for Development also provide a new framework for Australia and Pacific island nations to work together to achieve shared objectives. Six of the Pacific partnerships that were signed in 2008 and 2009 identify 'improved education' as a priority outcome.

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<sup>2</sup> See *TVET in East Timor and the Pacific: challenges, response and lessons* page 16 of this report

# The state of education in Asia and the Pacific

**During the past decade the number of children enrolled in primary and secondary schools globally has steadily increased.** Twenty-eight million more children were enrolled in primary school in 2006 than in 2000, when the 'Education for All' goals were agreed.<sup>3</sup> In South and West Asia the number of children out of primary school more than halved between 1999 and 2006—a considerable achievement as the net enrolment rate was an estimated 75 per cent only a decade ago.<sup>4</sup>

Better pathways to higher levels of education have increased the incentive to complete primary school and continue on to secondary school. Between 1999 and 2006 increases in secondary school enrolments were recorded in South Asia, where net enrolment rates rose from 39 per cent to 45 per cent. However, secondary school enrolment rates remain low in a number of Pacific island countries—at around 30 per cent in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

**There has been impressive progress made towards achieving MDG 3—the elimination of gender disparities in enrolments at all levels of education by 2015.** Most Pacific island countries are on track to meet gender targets and Samoa has already met the target. Many countries in Asia have also made good progress towards gender parity in schools. Bangladesh has already met the target through a range of policies, including extensive incentive programs for girls' education.

Although net enrolment rates have improved considerably, deteriorating economic conditions, entrenched cultural and social factors, and geographical isolation continue to disadvantage girls. In Pakistan, only 43 per cent of children enrolled in primary schools are female. Globally, girls are also significantly under-represented in secondary schooling as well as in TVET. In the Pacific, women typically make up only 20–30 per cent of TVET enrolments.<sup>5</sup>

**Despite the progress achieved in Asia and the Pacific, it is unlikely that many of the global goals for education will be met by 2015.** Particular attention needs to be focused on improving access to education for children most likely to remain out of school or drop out after only a few years of schooling. This includes children in rural and remote areas, those with a disability and, more generally, those from disadvantaged groups and poorer families. In 2006, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific estimated that less than 10 per cent of children and youth with a disability in the region had access to primary education, compared with 70 per cent of those who did not have a disability<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, *Overcoming inequality: why governance matters*, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 2008, viewed October 2009, <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001776/177683e.pdf>>.

<sup>4</sup> The net enrolment rate is calculated as the number enrolled from the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

<sup>5</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Skilling the Pacific: technical and vocational education and training in the Pacific*, Pacific studies series, ADB, Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2008, p. xxi.

<sup>6</sup> Findings of the UNESCAP profile of 28 countries and areas in Asia and the Pacific in 2006



**A key challenge is to enable children to go to school, complete a full cycle of good quality, basic education and achieve satisfactory learning outcomes.** Focusing on enrolment is not enough. There is growing evidence that, even where enrolment targets are being met, the poor quality of education means that children are not acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. In Papua New Guinea and the Pacific, more children are entering the school system, but many leave primary school unable to read, write or solve basic mathematical problems.<sup>7</sup> Even though Indonesia and the Philippines have primary net enrolment ratios of more than 90 per cent, less than 80 per cent of children in those countries complete all years of primary schooling<sup>8</sup>. In Papua New Guinea, the primary completion rate is just 53 per cent<sup>9</sup>. Poor quality basic education reduces student capacity to succeed in further education or employment.

**There is concern that the global economic recession will threaten many of the education gains made in recent years** by reducing the ability of both households and governments to invest in education. Decreases in public education spending will increase the likelihood that countries will miss the MDG of achieving universal primary education by 2015. This in turn is likely to undermine the chances of achieving other MDGs. Effective monitoring of the impact of the recession on government spending, households and schools is needed to shape adaptive policy responses, such as school feeding programs, grants or scholarships for disadvantaged children.

**Conflict continues to have a debilitating impact in a number of countries.** Pakistan and Sri Lanka have faced major challenges in the past year, and ongoing emergency and post-conflict situations in the southern Philippines, East Timor and Solomon Islands have continued to constrain achievements. A major challenge that donors face when supporting the delivery of education services in fragile states is 'how to achieve near-term humanitarian goals while also advancing long-term sustainability'.<sup>10</sup>

**There is a growing demand for a highly skilled and mobile labour force;** yet skill shortages remain widespread. Moreover, current education and training standards in the region are not high, with many TVET institutions suffering from common shortcomings—poor teacher skills and industry experience, obsolete equipment and curricula, weak links to labour market opportunities, funding shortages and deteriorating infrastructure.

**Weak education information systems lead to ineffective and inefficient management.** In many low-income countries official data is dominated by quantitative data (eg. enrolment figures) with little focus on quality impacts (such as measuring learning outcomes). This weakness limits the capacity of public administrations to plan and provide good quality education services, teacher training programs or to improve curricula.

<sup>7</sup> AusAID, *Tracking development and governance in the Pacific*, Australian Agency for International Development, Canberra, August 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Philippines primary NER = 92%, students completing grade 5 = 70.4%. Indonesia primary NER = 98.4%, students completing grade 5 = 79.5%. Source: United Nations Development Programme, *MDG monitor: tracking the Millennium Development Goals—MDG profiles*, viewed 8 October 2009, <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/factsheets.cfm>.

<sup>9</sup> Primary NER (prep-grade 8) = 53%, Papua New Guinea Department of Education 2007

<sup>10</sup> OECD, *Service delivery in fragile situations: key concepts, findings and lessons*, OECD/DAC discussion paper, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 2008, viewed October 2009, <[www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/54/40886707.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/54/40886707.pdf)>, p. 32. See also OECD, *Principles for good international engagement in fragile states*, Development Assistance Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, viewed October 2009, <[http://www.oecd.org/document/46/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_33693550\\_35233262\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/46/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_35233262_1_1_1_1,00.html)>, P Rose & M Greeley, *Education in fragile states: capturing lessons and identifying good practice*, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2006, and Meagher P. 2005, *Service Delivery in Fragile States. Framing the Issues*. Iris Center, University of Maryland, College Park, Draft, revised July 25, 2005.

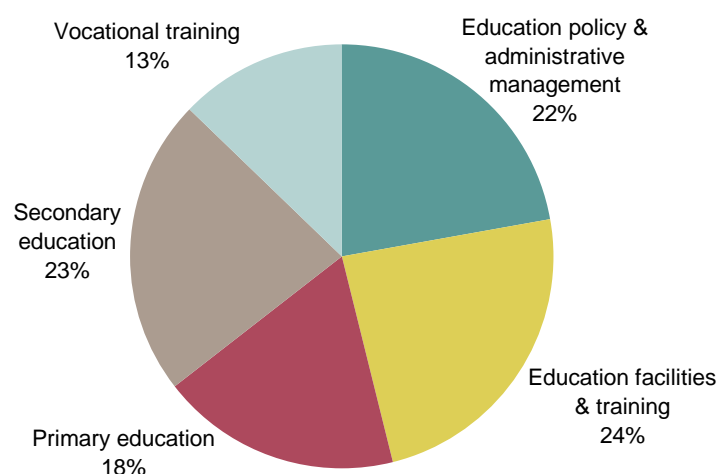


# An overview of Australia's education development assistance in 2008–09

The policy statement on Australia's international development assistance in the 2009–10 Budget highlights education as a flagship sector of Australia's increased aid program.<sup>11</sup> Australia's approach focuses on helping partner countries build effective education systems, improve education quality and learning achievements, and increase access to education, especially for the most disadvantaged. In 2008–09 Australia invested approximately \$506 million in the education sector (including scholarships). If scholarships and contributions to multilateral agencies are excluded, the investment totalled about \$328 million.

Australian support for activities to strengthen partner countries' education policy and administrative management accounted for 22 per cent of expenditure on the education sector (excluding scholarships) in 2008–09 (see Figure 1). In Vanuatu, an education information management system is now fully operational following the provision of logistics and training support. In Papua New Guinea, strengthening national policy, planning, budgeting, human resources and information management systems, as well as school management and teaching and learning, has been a focus of the education sectoral improvement program.

**Figure 1: Composition of AusAID expenditure on education<sup>a</sup> in 2008–09 by OECD Development Assistance Committee sector categories**



<sup>a</sup> Excluding scholarships and funding given to the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund and other multilateral education programs.

Data source: AusAID.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Government 2009, *Budget 2009–10—Australia's international development assistance program: a good international citizen*, statement by the Hon. Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Hon. Bob McMullan MP, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, 12 May, <[http://www.ato.gov.au/budget/2009-10/content/ministerial\\_statements/ausaid/html/index\\_ausaid.htm](http://www.ato.gov.au/budget/2009-10/content/ministerial_statements/ausaid/html/index_ausaid.htm)>.

**Table 1: AusAID expenditure on education in 2008-09, by country and region<sup>a</sup>**

Program	Expenditure 2008-09
	\$m
Indonesia	163.3
Pacific regional	37.3
Papua New Guinea	35.8
Philippines	33.1
Bangladesh	11.3
Vanuatu	6.0
Fiji	5.5
East Timor	5.4
Iraq	4.2
Laos	4.0
Samoa	3.9
Afghanistan	3.2
Global	3.2
Pakistan	2.9
Sri Lanka	2.2
Kiribati	1.8
Nepal	1.6
Burma	1.0
Cook Islands	0.9
Nauru	0.6
Tonga	0.5
Palau	0.2
Tuvalu	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>328.0</b>

<sup>a</sup> Excluding scholarships and funding given to the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund and other multilateral education programs.

Data source: AusAID

Australia's major bilateral partner in the education sector in 2008–09 was Indonesia, which received more than \$163 million in education assistance. This included a \$137 million component of the Australia Indonesia Program for Reconstruction and Development (AIPRD). The AIPRD was established in January 2005 to support Indonesia's reconstruction and development efforts in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004.

Australia's other large bilateral education aid partners in 2008–09 were Papua New Guinea (\$35.8 million), Pacific regional programs (\$37.3 million, including \$32.3 million to support the Australia-Pacific Technical College) and the Philippines (\$33.1 million). In the Philippines Australia's program of assistance to the Department of Education helped to develop learning materials and provided teacher training in Mindanao to more than 13 500 primary school teachers and more than 900 teacher trainers and supervisors.

The Pacific Partnerships for Development provide a new framework for Australia and Pacific island nations to commit jointly to achieving shared objectives and to make more rapid progress towards the Pacific partners' education goals, including MDGs 2 and 3. In the 2008–09 financial year, five new partnerships were signed—with Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu. Three more partnerships were signed at the Pacific Islands Forum in August 2009—with Tuvalu, Tonga and Nauru. All of these partnerships make commitments to education (Table 2) and in six of the partnerships significantly improved education has been identified as a priority outcome (Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tonga and Nauru). This underlines the strong commitment of Pacific governments to improving education access and outcomes.

**Table 2: Pacific Partnerships for Development: commitments to education**

Country	Education commitment
Papua New Guinea	Hasten progress towards universal basic education (primary and secondary schooling), with a focus on increasing the percentage of female students and raising the net enrolment rate in primary schools to 70 per cent by 2015. Develop plans to engage in vocational training and higher education.
Kiribati	Improve basic education, particularly by improving literacy and numeracy skills of school-age children and ensuring that public schools have the necessary resources and support to deliver good quality education services. Develop workforce skills in high demand by industry, both domestically and abroad, to address youth unemployment. This will require higher TVET and English language proficiency.
Solomon Islands	Investigate options to provide new Australian assistance to the education sector.
Vanuatu	Assist the Government of Vanuatu's plan to phase out compulsory parental contributions to school fees by 2010 and focus on improving curricula and access to learning materials, enhancing teachers' professional development and upgrading facilities. Increase training and employment opportunities through support for demand-driven training services.
Tonga	Build a more highly skilled workforce linked to industry demand and enable the expansion of technical and vocational training organisations, improvements in teaching capabilities and increased training and employment opportunities.
Samoa	Increase equitable access and the quality of education and training by improving the services for people with disabilities, reducing student drop-outs and increasing the teacher retention rate. Increase employment options through quality-assured training in high-demand areas.
Nauru	Improve educational outcomes by upgrading the quality of and access to primary and secondary education and relevant tertiary, technical and vocational education services.
Tuvalu	Initially focus on the prudent management of the education sector's limited financial resources. Support Tuvalu's longer term economic prospects by improving local TVET facilities and curricula.

In 2008–09 Australia continued to support partner countries through an increasing range of modalities aimed at accelerating progress towards the MDG and 'Education for All' global education targets. In Nepal, Australia is supporting the School Sector Reform Program—our first engagement in a comprehensive sector-wide approach to education. In the Pacific region, Australia is providing Papua New Guinea technical support to develop a sector-wide approach, and is working closely with Nauru to develop and implement its education sectoral plans. In Pakistan, discussions are under way with other bilateral donors to finalise a sector-wide education plan for the North West Frontier Province.

In 2008–09 Australia strengthened its international sectoral partnerships in education. Australia's \$50 million contribution to the Education For All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) over four years to 2011, will enable more low-income countries to access funds and expertise to assist in achieving their education goals (Box 1). During 2009, AusAID led the task team to redesign one of the FTI trust funds, the Education Program Development Fund, and in July 2009 was elected as one of six donor members of the FTI board of directors. This membership is helping to extend Australia's reach beyond Asia and the Pacific, particularly to Africa. Currently, 23 African countries benefit from FTI support and another 14 are expected to apply for support during the next two years.

#### **Box 1: 'Education for All'—Australia and the Fast Track Initiative**

During 2008–09 Australia deepened its global engagement by taking a stronger role in the 'Education for All' Fast Track Initiative. The initiative is the only global partnership with a focus on achieving universal primary education (MDG 2) by providing funds and technical expertise and by building capacity to assist low-income countries to create and implement education sectoral plans. Thirty-seven developing countries have joined the initiative, and those with endorsed education plans are able to receive financial support and/or technical assistance. The partnership includes key civil society partners for education and major education donors (more than 30 bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks). Since its inception in 2002, the initiative has helped to achieve:

- > a 20 million increase in the number of children enrolled in school in Sub-Saharan Africa
- > a dramatic improvement in school completion rates, with 15 FTI countries now on track to reach the goal of 95 per cent of all children completing primary school by 2015
- > a significant boost in the enrolment of girls, who now account for 60 per cent of new enrolments in FTI countries.

Australia has continued to work closely with UN partners such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme, specifically focusing on increasing access to education for those hardest to reach through mainstream education programs. In Pakistan, support has been extended through the World Food Programme's school feeding programs and through UNICEF to enable girls and boys affected by conflict to continue their education. In Laos, Australia is working with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and the World Food Programme to implement the 'School of Quality' approach. During 2008–09, 4 081 tonnes of food assistance was made available for over 89,000 children and their families in food insecure areas, providing a crucial incentive for the poorest children to attend school.

In 2007 the introduction of the Education Budget Measure provided an additional \$540 million to education programs over four years. This funding provides country programs and partner governments with greater assurance of multi-year sectoral funding, facilitating more effective planning and implementation of education programs. This is in line with Australia's commitments to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Cairns Compact for Strengthened Development Coordination in the Pacific, agreed at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting in Cairns on 6 August 2009. In 2008–09 this additional funding supported programs in Bangladesh, Burma, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific, as well as the FTI global partnership.

# Education: achieving results

In 2008–09 Australia’s education assistance continued to enable better access to good quality education services in Asia and the Pacific. Programs supported the development and dissemination of improved curriculum materials, the strengthening of teacher training and the improvement of learning environments by, for example, constructing and refurbishing schools such as in Indonesia (Box 2). Net enrolment rates in provinces targeted by the Access to Better Education in Laos program increased from 79 per cent to 84 per cent between 2006 and 2008. The regions targeted by the program are particularly challenging environments—poor and remote, with limited infrastructure, and ethnically diverse. Success in these locations represents a significant achievement. Through the Nauru Education and Training Program, secondary school enrolment rates increased from 5 per cent in 2006 to 32 per cent in 2009. Primary school completion rates also registered an increase—from 76 per cent to 81 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

## Box 2: Enhancing access : The Australia–Indonesia Basic Education Program

The Government of Indonesia has given priority to expanding junior secondary education (years 7–9) to all areas of the country to meet its commitment to provide a universal standard of nine years of compulsory, free schooling to all children by 2010. Australian assistance is helping to build and equip new schools and to provide good quality junior secondary education.

Australian support has focused on building schools in areas where existing schools were too distant for children to walk. By 2010 the Australia–Indonesia Basic Education Program will have built or extended more than 2000 schools (9200 classrooms), including 500 Islamic junior secondary schools. The schools are in poor areas—nearly half are in Sulawesi and another 41 per cent in Nusa Tenggara (the eastern islands) and Kalimantan. To date, girls account for more than half of the enrolments. Schools are successfully integrating more students with disabilities, who account for more than 2 per cent of enrolments. Once complete, these schools will provide 330,000 new school places.

Performance reporting indicates that the promotion of gender equality is being better integrated into AusAID’s education activities. A focus on gender equality in teacher training programs in Bangladesh has helped to improve the gender balance in the teaching workforce. Curriculum reforms such as those being undertaken in Vanuatu through the Vanuatu Education Sector Action Plan are addressing gender stereotypes in learning materials and methods. Infrastructure programs such as those in the Philippines and Indonesia have helped to encourage more girls into school through the construction and refurbishment of schools and toilet facilities. Australia’s education support to Laos has helped to empower women, who now play a greater role in the management of education as members of school boards.

<sup>12</sup> Figures from an assessment of the program’s quality at implementation and from the Government of Nauru.

Twelve program performance reports for 2008–09 reported against specific education objectives, demonstrating that progress was largely satisfactory, with a notable improvement recorded in Samoa. A decreased rating was recorded for one objective each in Indonesia and the Philippines.

In Indonesia, the rating decline is a result of adjustments made to align the program with the Government of Indonesia's immediate priorities. Support for education *quality* programs was reduced to better focus on *access* and *governance* programs. However, the development and adoption by the Indonesian Government of the Education Quality Assurance and Improvement System and the work to improve the quality of education in *madrasah* were significant achievements. In the Philippines, the rating decline highlights weaknesses in the public administration and the need to strengthen the central office of the Department of Education to better support the sub-national implementation of the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda.

Preliminary performance reporting on the quality of initiatives indicated that greater efforts were being made within country programs to adopt harmonised and collaborative partner–donor approaches to deliver education assistance. Performance reports also consistently cited the need for partner governments to have strong national leadership and a commitment to meeting the MDGs and 'Education for All' goals—both critical to ensuring the sustainability of results and ultimately program success. In some partner countries such as Indonesia (now well on track to meeting MDG 2), harmonised approaches have enabled significant progress to be made in the education sector generally and within Australian-supported programs specifically. In contrast, in countries such as Kiribati, poorly coordinated donor assistance and fragmented support (including within our own program) were identified as major impediments to achieving program objectives.

Australia is committed to promoting inclusion and equity in education by focusing on the most disadvantaged, including girls, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and those in remote areas. In 2008 the Australian Government launched the aid program's first strategy on disability.<sup>13</sup> It sets out the government's commitment to inclusive education and accessible infrastructure across all bilateral education programs. Performance reporting indicates that a number of programs are responding to the need to develop inclusive education programs.

Australia supports the Kiribati School for the Disabled which has enabled access for students to educational facilities, and a twelve month pilot program supported by Australia provided Samoan students with disabilities access to a secondary school education for the first time. Programs supported in Bangladesh have a strong (and expanding) focus on disability, as do Australian programs of support Tonga. In the Philippines, Australia supports the implementation of an education policy framework to improve access to education for more than 50 000 Muslim students and more than 5000 indigenous students. Nepal's education system has been successful in reaching minority ethnic communities and is being monitored through a Vulnerable Community Development Framework prepared by the Government of Nepal, supported by donors including Australia.

A review of information provided through AusAID's performance reporting mechanisms and from mid-term reviews such as that of the Australia–Pacific Technical College found that a stronger focus on gender issues in the design and implementation of education sectoral programs generated more positive outcomes in education access and quality indicators.

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<sup>13</sup> AusAID, *Development for all: towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009–2014*, Australian Agency for International Development, Canberra, November 2008.



Importantly, those programs that addressed gender issues explicitly during their design and adopted inclusive education principles and strategies when they were being implemented performed better than those that did not. Building the capacity of partner government systems to address gender issues remains a key focus.

Performance reporting also indicates that education programs are increasingly delivering support in fragile and conflict affected situations. In 2008–09 approximately 50 per cent of Australian aid was delivered to states considered fragile by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility. In conflict environments in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, in post-conflict situations in Nepal, Solomon Islands and East Timor and in environmentally fragile contexts in the island countries of the Pacific, AusAID staff are noting the complexities of delivering good quality education in diverse and particularly challenging situations (Box 3). In Burma, Australian support assisted the UNICEF Multi-Donor Education Fund to extend programs into areas where schools had been damaged or destroyed by Cyclone Nargis in May 2008.

**Box 3: ‘Education for All’ in a post-conflict environment:**

**Australia’s support for education in Nepal**

With significant contributions from the Government of Nepal (US\$2 billion) and modest contributions from donors (including Australia, which will contribute \$2.2 million in 2009–10), Nepal has registered sound progress towards universal primary education in recent years. The net enrolment rate in 2001 stood at 79 per cent—up from 65 per cent five years earlier. Moreover, the survival rate<sup>14</sup> to grade 5 has increased from 58 per cent to 79 per cent. The fact that this progress was sustained during the civil conflict that ended in 2006 is a remarkable achievement. Nepal’s experience demonstrates that even the most deeply rooted problems and inequalities are susceptible to public policies. Reforms in the following areas have been particularly important.

**Strengthened local accountability**

The devolution of authority to districts and communities insulated education from a general breakdown in centralised planning and service provision, and from the impact of civil conflict.

**Improved equality**

Reforms have scaled up scholarship programs for girls, minority ethnic groups and disabled children at the primary and secondary levels. The number of scholarship recipients increased to 1.7 million in 2008 and the aim is to have reached 2.7 million by 2009.

**Infrastructure expansion and a focus on quality**

The country has embarked on an ambitious program to increase the number of schools and classrooms, expand teacher recruitment and improve the supply of textbooks.

**Effective donor support**

Nepal has been at the forefront of efforts to improve donor governance. A sector-wide approach was developed to support the 2004–09 Education for All Programme and in 2009, Nepal commenced its first education sector-wide program with support from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Food Programme.

<sup>14</sup> The survival rate by grade is the percentage of a cohort of pupils (or students) enrolled in the first grade of a given level or cycle of education in a given school year who are expected to reach successive grades.



# TVET in East Timor & the Pacific – challenges, response and lessons

## Challenges

East Timor and countries of the Pacific face considerable challenges in achieving sustained long-term economic growth because of their size, remoteness, limited economic base and high population growth rates. The temporary and permanent migration of skilled and unskilled labour is a feature of many Pacific island countries and can be an important source of growth if the home countries can engage with and respond to the requirements of international markets. The public and private sectors are demanding better skilled 'job ready' graduates. The demand for technical qualifications that are recognised internationally will continue to grow as opportunities for mobile labour increase and the demands of domestic sectors (such as tourism, mining, fishing, agriculture, construction and health services) become more sophisticated.

To meet this demand, graduates need to have the technical competencies and skills required by employers. However, current education and training standards in the Pacific region are not high; after six years of basic education many students are still not functionally literate and numerate. Moreover, many of the important ingredients for good training outcomes—occupational standards, qualified instructors, the necessary equipment and quality assurance mechanisms—are either absent or of poor quality.

Women and girls are particularly disadvantaged in accessing good quality TVET.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to basic education enrolment figures, where gender parity is close to being achieved in East Timor and most Pacific island countries, women tend to be under-represented in TVET programs. Beyond broad access issues, women are channelled into courses supporting traditional female occupations, such as home economics, secretarial work, and hospitality. External factors that affect the participation of women in skills training include cultural stereotypes, which can inhibit young women from participating in certain programs or discourage parents from investing in the training of their female children. Factors internal to TVET systems also discriminate against girls, including the lack of female boarding and other facilities and a low proportion of female teachers.

## Australia's response

Responding to these challenges, Australian assistance to the TVET subsector in East Timor and the Pacific amounted to more than \$62 million in 2008–09<sup>16</sup>. This assistance focused on strengthening the organisational and management effectiveness of TVET programs and supporting improvements in the quality of instruction. Commitments are forecast to increase with growing demand for TVET support in the region and beyond.

<sup>15</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Skilling the Pacific*, p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> Includes \$32.3 million to the Australia-Pacific Technical College, \$2.8 million to the Vanuatu TVET Sector Strengthening Program and \$5.3 million to the East Timor Employment, Education and Skills Development Program.

At present three key initiatives are the pillars of Australian TVET support— the Vanuatu TVET Sector Strengthening Program, the East Timor Employment, Education and Skills Development Program and the Australia–Pacific Technical College. Other TVET initiatives are being developed, including a joint 10-year program with the Government of Tonga and NZAID, a program to develop the Kiribati Institute of Technology and support to provide TVET programs in secondary schools and community training centres in Tuvalu (table 3).

### **Vanuatu TVET Sector Strengthening Program**

In Vanuatu, Australia's program of TVET support has demonstrated the benefits of building effective partnerships with the national and local government. The TVET Sector Strengthening Program has decentralised operations through the establishment of provincial training boards in all six provinces. The development of occupational standards and national qualifications frameworks has been critical to the measurement and assessment of the quality and relevance of skills attained.

There have been challenges in Australia's engagement in the Vanuatu TVET subsector. An independent review of phase 1 of the TVET program revealed a lack of focus on sustainability issues, the need for better coordination and collaboration between key departments and organisations at the provincial and national levels early in implementation, and the limitations of training inputs if there are no strategic plans to develop human resources. In the future, increasing emphasis will be placed on ensuring that systems are sustainable and replicable. Specifically, Australian assistance in phase 2 is taking a programmatic approach with a focus on strengthening the provincial–national governance structures for TVET, building stronger links between training demand and supply, and building management and administrative capacity at the provincial level.

### **East Timor Employment, Education and Skills Development Program**

Australian support is helping the Government of East Timor to achieve its objectives to improve education, skills development and youth employment through the development of the nation's TVET system. Australia's support for the Youth Employment Promotion Program (administered by the International Labour Organisation) has helped establish the National Labour Force Development Institute which is strengthening links between TVET providers and industry to improve the relevance of training courses. Work experience and on-the-job training programs have been launched, and competency standards have been defined for the tourism and hospitality, and building and construction industries. Through the Education Sector Support Project (co-funded and administered by the World Bank and implemented by the Government of East Timor), a national qualifications framework has been developed, covering formal and technical education and vocational employment.

There are a number of challenges in the TVET subsector in East Timor. While unemployment, particularly for young people remains high, trades and self-employment are perceived as being less desirable than professional jobs. The Government of East Timor hopes to change this perception and expand the enrolment of secondary and post-secondary students into technical rather than academic education streams. However, any expansion of secondary and tertiary education (including TVET) is likely to be restricted for some time by low levels of primary school completion and learning achievement.

**Table 3: Australia's support for TVET programs in the Pacific region in 2008–09 and planned support**

Program name	Funding	Duration	Objectives
<b>Pacific regional</b>			
Australia–Pacific Technical College (campuses in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa & Vanuatu)	\$149.5m	2007–11	To establish and provide for the operation of the college for its first four years.  To produce 'work-ready' graduates to Australian standards through five separate schools: hospitality and tourism; health and community services; automotive trades; manufacturing; and construction and electrical trades.
South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment Regional Qualifications Register	\$1.7m	2008–13	To set up an Accreditation Unit to oversee the development and maintenance of a Pacific Regional Qualification Register and Pacific Regional Qualifications Framework to enhance regional recognition of countries' qualifications, international benchmarking, and prospects for workers.
<b>East Timor</b>			
Employment, Education and Skills Development Program	\$9.8m	2008–12	To strengthen the capacity of the Government of East Timor to achieve its stated objectives for education, skills development and youth employment.
<b>Vanuatu</b>			
TVET Sector Strengthening Program, Phase 2	\$8m	2009–13	To provide increased employment and income earning outcomes for clients through employment and training services.
<b>Nauru</b>			
Secondary School Refurbishment & Development, Phase 2	\$2.5m	2008–09	To assist Nauru to align its secondary TVET courses to regional TVET providers, including the Australia–Pacific Technical College, and provide trainer training and training facilities at high school.
<b>Tonga</b>			
Tonga TVET Support Program (a joint program with NZAID)	\$8m	2009–19 Phase 1: 2009–13	To enable Tongans to be more competitive in domestic, regional and international labour markets through improved demand-based TVET and internationally recognised qualifications.
<b>Kiribati</b>			
Kiribati Institute of Technology	\$250 000	Jan. 2009 to Dec. 2010	To appoint and mobilise a new principal for the institute through the Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism.
Kiribati TVET Strengthening Program	Phase 1 & 2: \$11m	Phase 1 & 2: 2010–15	To develop the Kiribati Institute of Technology and other providers to deliver TVET programs to Australian standards under an arrangement with an Australian provider.
<b>Palau</b>			
Palau Tourism & Hospitality School of Excellence	\$230 000	May 2009 to Dec. 2010	To refurbish and develop a School of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality training at the Palau Community College and strengthen tourism and hospitality training programs.
<b>Tuvalu</b>			
Tuvalu Education Sector Support Program	Expected \$2.265m	Expected 2009–13	To support TVET in secondary schools and community training centres.
<b>Samoa</b>			
Component of PPD priority outcome 3—improved education	tba	Stage 1: 2009 <sup>a</sup>	Stage 1: To support the Samoan Qualifications Authority in continuing to improve the TVET subsector's capacity to address the workforce's development and the skills needed by the country.
<b>Papua New Guinea</b>			
TVET component of PPD higher education schedule	tba	tba	A design mission in late 2009 will identify a program of TVET strengthening for institutes.

<sup>a</sup> Further TVET work will be from 2011 to 2013—delayed due to post-tsunami priorities and the pressing needs of basic education.

Note: PPD = Pacific Partnership for Development. tba = to be advised.

## Australia–Pacific Technical College

The Australia–Pacific Technical College is a large-scale program delivering internationally recognised technical and vocational learning relevant to targeted industry sectors at campuses in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu. Its first students began in July 2007, and it aims to have 3000 graduates with Australian vocational qualifications by June 2011. The Australian Government is providing \$149.5 million to establish and operate the college to June 2011. As of 30 March 2009, the college had enrolled 1503 students (32 per cent women), awarded 1193 scholarships (35 per cent to women), graduated 363 students (49 per cent female) and provided training for the staff of 520 different employers. The college is also having a positive impact in the TVET subsector beyond its four campuses by delivering Trainer and Assessor Certificate IV to trainers from national TVET institutions in Tonga, Nauru, Samoa and Kiribati.

Australia's support of the Australia–Pacific Technical College represents a new way of engaging with the TVET subsector and has few of the characteristics of a traditional aid activity. The program of support is delivered directly by Australian organisations. It does not include the usual approaches to capacity development and there are no advisers or counterparts. The college's partners are organisations that share a commitment to good quality training, management, governance, flexible delivery and achieving results. While five of its training partners are government-owned entities, four are private firms. Financial arrangements with both public and private partners have the characteristics of commercial contracts rather than aid transfers.<sup>17</sup>

Australian support has focused on improving productivity and raising standards of service delivery by introducing operating procedures and quality assurance to local workplace practices that meet Australian standards. While it is too early to assess productivity gains, early indications are positive. Fiji Sugar has noted that the introduction of new practices resulted in a 10 per cent reduction in the downtime of expensive equipment, which was estimated to cost the company more than \$5000 an hour. ATS, a commercial food service company in Fiji, attributed 30 per cent of its efficiency gains to training and new workplace practices introduced by college graduates<sup>18</sup>. The college's focus on hygiene in early childhood education is being incorporated into the Government of Vanuatu's expanded early childhood education programs for provincial communities.

The Australia–Pacific Technical College has significantly increased the participation of women in TVET. It has achieved this through a range of strategies such as introducing training in areas of female employment that were not serviced before, building in a range of flexible delivery approaches such as block training, which reduces the time away from home and family, appointing female trainers, and establishing customised courses for females such as women-only classes in traditional male-dominated trade areas.

A major challenge is the college's dependence on an effective basic education system to bring students to an appropriate educational standard for entrance to its training system. Bridging courses have been introduced to address the lower than anticipated levels of English language, literacy and numeracy in applicants to the School of Health and Community Services. In the medium to longer term, however, ensuring that basic education services are adequate to produce students capable of meeting the entry qualifications for further education and training will be crucial to the success of any investment in post-basic education and training.

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<sup>17</sup> The public sector training partners are the National University of Samoa – Institute of Technology, the Vanuatu Institute of Technology, the Port Moresby Technical College, the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji and the Vanuatu Ministry of Education. The industry partners are Asco Motors in Fiji, and Ela Motors, Hastings Deering and OTML in Papua New Guinea.

<sup>18</sup> According to a 2009 independent mid-term review of the Australia–Pacific Technical College

## Lessons learned

The need to get the basics right and put in place relevant and effective organisational structures staffed by professionals with appropriate skills, has been an important lesson from Australia's engagement in the TVET subsector. Many training systems operate in isolation of labour market demand, with little or no employer participation. Organisational structures are often weak and fragmented. In many countries several line ministries are responsible for different aspects of TVET, which leads to overlapping responsibilities and poor coordination.

While Australia's support for TVET in East Timor and the Pacific is still evolving, performance information has provided the following lessons. These will inform the further development and implementation of TVET programs.

- > **Reforming the provision of technical and vocational training is complex and requires a long-term commitment;** based on adequate planning, appropriate sequencing of reforms and programs, and predictable resourcing. While the change-management phase of reform may be protracted, many countries are achieving the desired reforms by drawing on what has been learned in other countries and using appropriately experienced technical assistance while preparing local staff to manage the system in the longer term.
- > **The development of TVET systems should be appropriate for the size of the country and available labour market options.** A balanced focus on the employment opportunities facilitated by training is vital. Even in constrained circumstances, TVET systems should be able to ensure quality-assured qualifications that are recognised and that support labour mobility in the region and beyond. National structures could include a national qualifications framework that provides pathways between providers and course levels, quality assurance systems for training providers and courses, and graduate tracer studies to monitor the market efficacy of courses offered.
- > **Industry involvement and leadership are crucial in determining which courses are needed, and competency standards for courses.** This must be done in a simple and easily facilitated way in recognition of the limited number of industry members in small countries. Australia's experience and that of other TVET programs in the Pacific and East Timor have shown that it is preferable and more cost efficient to adopt and adapt courses from New Zealand, Australia or Fiji, for example, than to develop fully local courses.
- > **Innovative approaches are required to ensure broader access to better TVET opportunities.** This is particularly pertinent for disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities. There is also an urgent need to broaden the training opportunities available to women and promote their active participation in 'non-traditional' trades and management-related subjects. Women tend to be under-represented in technical training programs; their participation is largely confined to courses supporting traditional female occupations. The gender bias in the types of training provided to men and women constrains women's ability to start their own businesses or compete for jobs in local and other labour markets.