



Australian Government  
AusAID

# Better education

A POLICY FOR AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN EDUCATION

MAY 2007

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*COVER: On the morning of Sunday 26 December 2004 a severe earthquake in the ocean off the coast of northern Sumatra caused tsunamis (tidal waves) that devastated communities in countries in the Indian Ocean. Australia acted immediately to provide assistance, including deploying 15 Australian school teachers to the Maldives to assist the Ministry of Education to re-open schools in time for the start of the new school year. This grade 1 school girl was able to resume her education at Thaajuddeen primary school in the Maldives because of the help provided by Australian volunteers and the Australian Agency for International Development. PHOTO: AusAID*





ABOVE: In Aceh, Indonesia, the Australian Government's aid program is assisting local communities to construct schools following the destruction of the 2004 tsunami. The re-opening of a school in Lampisang is celebrated with traditional dancing.  
PHOTO: AusAID

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

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<b>AusAID</b>	Australian Agency for International Development
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSD</b>	United Nations Statistics Division



# Executive summary

Investing in people through improving education and health is one of the four themes of the Australian Government's 2006 White Paper *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability*. *Better education* provides the detailed policy guidance for tripling Australian support for education systems through the aid program.

Australia's objective for education 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.

Our aim by 2010 is to assist developing countries increase by 10 million the number of children attending school and to improve the quality of education for an additional 50 million children.

While the focus of our support will depend on the diverse needs of partner countries, the priorities of the Australian aid program are to:

- > improve the functioning of national education systems to enable more girls and boys to complete primary school and progress to higher levels of education
- > improve the relevance and quality of education, including in vocational and technical education, so that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for life and productive employment.

Universal primary education and gender parity at all levels of education are Millennium Development Goals. While there has been some progress towards meeting these goals, more than 77 million children remain out of school worldwide, of whom one-third are in the Asia–Pacific region. Most countries in the region are some way from providing all children with primary schooling and enrolments at secondary level are generally very low. Globally there has been an improvement in gender parity yet inequality for girls remains an issue – of the region's 26 million children out of school, 16 million are girls.

Getting girls and boys to attend school is only part of the challenge. There is concern across the region that education systems are not providing students with the skills needed for productive employment. In some countries under-educated and unemployed youth may contribute to instability and violence, eroding development gains.

International experience highlights key lessons for future donor support for education:

- > The full benefits of education are only realised if schooling is extended to all children within the population.
- > Weak education performance is generally due to underlying problems with resources, structures and incentives rather than simply a lack of technical capacity.
- > The focus should be on improving learning achievements, as completing school will not necessarily provide children with the basic skills for poverty reduction.
- > Aid will be more effective when it is coordinated with all other investments in the sector.

*Better education* takes into account these lessons and provides a strategic framework for improving the effectiveness of Australia's education assistance (see page 3). The central focus is on helping partners build effective education systems. There is a dual emphasis on improving the governance of the systems and on strengthening the quality and efficiency of service delivery.

Governance is critical. Australia will work with key public and private organisations to improve policy capacity and strengthen administrative systems, such as government financial management systems. At the community level we will support measures that increase family involvement in school management and raise demand for greater transparency and accountability in service provision.

Lack of resources for service delivery is a major constraint to improving education outcomes for children. Our support will contribute to filling the estimated US\$7 billion financial gap required globally each year to meet international education goals. Assistance will focus on increasing the availability and quality of teachers, classrooms and learning materials.

Australia will also collaborate with partners to meet specific regional education needs such as labour market skills shortages, English language skills development and improvements in education quality in Islamic schools in Indonesia, South Asia and the Philippines.

Increased effectiveness of our aid will be achieved through improving the performance orientation of our initiatives, including through greater sectoral analysis, increased alignment with partner governments' plans and systems, and improved performance reporting. We will also increase engagement and dialogue with governments in the region and with other donors, and will improve the coherence of aid policies by integrating anti-corruption and gender equality measures into our education initiatives.



ABOVE: A student at a government primary school in Rangpur, North-West Bangladesh. In recent years Bangladesh, with support from donors including Australia, has increased the number of girls in primary school to achieve gender parity. This is an important milestone on the path to equity in access to education. PHOTO: AusAID, Peter Duncan-Jones

# Strategic framework

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	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.
<b>AIM</b>	BY 2010 TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INCREASE BY 10 MILLION THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL AND TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR AN ADDITIONAL 50 MILLION CHILDREN.

## WHAT AUSTRALIA WILL SUPPORT

HELPING EDUCATION SYSTEMS DELIVER	
IMPROVE THE GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve policy capacity</li> <li>Strengthen government systems</li> <li>Help partners to develop sustainable information systems</li> <li>Support social accountability measures</li> <li>Support anti-corruption measures in education programs and introduce codes of conduct</li> </ul>
STRENGTHEN SERVICE DELIVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the availability and quality of resources such as teachers, classrooms and learning materials</li> <li>Trial innovative ways to encourage children to complete their education</li> <li>Support health initiatives within schools</li> <li>Support the re-establishment of schooling following emergencies and build domestic response capacity</li> </ul>
MEETING SPECIFIC REGIONAL NEEDS	
IMPROVE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist partners to reform their vocational and technical education systems</li> <li>Establish the new Australia–Pacific Technical College</li> </ul>
SUPPORT ISLAMIC EDUCATION	Assist in improving the quality of education in Islamic schools
IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the teaching of English in schools</li> <li>Support English language initiatives through informal education tools, such as the media</li> </ul>

## INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AID

STRENGTHEN PERFORMANCE ORIENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate more detailed sector analysis in country program education strategies</li> <li>Accelerate a shift to more sector programs with greater alignment to national education plans and strategies</li> <li>Improve performance reporting</li> <li>Seek policy coherence, particularly with the AusAID gender policy</li> </ul>
COMBAT CORRUPTION	Integrate anti-corruption measures in education programs
ENHANCE REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase policy dialogue with partner governments</li> <li>Enhance harmonisation with other bilateral donors, UN agencies and international development banks</li> <li>Strengthen whole-of-government approaches</li> </ul>



# 1 Introduction

The Australian Government's 2006 White Paper *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability*<sup>1</sup> sets out a strategic framework to guide the direction and delivery of Australia's overseas aid program for the next ten years. The framework is centred on the objective of the aid program, *to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interest.*

Investing in people through improving education and health<sup>2</sup> is one of the four themes of the White Paper. Better education and health provide the opportunity for all citizens, especially the poor, to participate in the economy. Development, however, is a holistic process. The success of investments in education and health is interlinked with progress on economic growth, improvements in the functioning of states and increased regional stability and cooperation – the other three themes of the White Paper.

This policy statement on education takes forward the directions of the White Paper. It provides the details on how Australia will assist its partner countries to improve their education systems to build the human capital necessary for achieving sustainable development.

## WHY SUPPORT EDUCATION?

Supporting education is one of the most effective uses of aid. Education provides the foundation for economic growth and self-reliance. It has additional benefits in health, governance, gender equality, stability and security, and in fostering effective states.

*Education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic growth, sound governance, and effective institutions.*<sup>3</sup>

Schooling alone does not lead to sound economies, but countries that have achieved high rates of growth have built their success on strong, broad-based education systems. Countries with educated populations are more productive, more responsive to development, and more attractive for private sector investment. Children who receive a quality education grow up with the skills needed to lift themselves out of poverty and break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage.

Democratic processes and social stability are also strengthened by education. People with at least a basic education are more likely to vote in elections and participate in community development. Conversely, dissatisfaction with public schooling can lead to social unrest and instability.

Ensuring that girls attend school is crucial to advancing equality in rights and opportunities and achieving health benefits. Better education for girls leads to more women participating in economic development and decision-making. Educated women tend to have smaller families, fewer of their children die in infancy, and the children who

survive are healthier and are more likely to go on to be better educated.

Education is a critical element in equipping people to respond to changing circumstances and emergencies. For example, in the fight against HIV/AIDS, education has been shown to build people's ability to make informed choices about risks and behaviour – one of the most important factors in protecting teenagers from infection. In the wake of natural disasters and conflict, emergency education measures minimise disruption to children's development and reduce the risk of child exploitation.



ABOVE: Primary school children in Tuvalu enjoy sports, which also develops their motor skills, improves their health and teaches them about participation and teamwork. PHOTO: Panos Pictures, Jocelyn Carlin

## AUSTRALIA'S OBJECTIVE

Australia has always provided strong support for education and training through its aid program, which traditionally has included a large tertiary scholarship program. Since 1996 Australia has provided increasing levels of support to develop education systems in partner countries, with an emphasis on primary and secondary schooling and vocational and technical education. With its high-quality education sector, Australia is well positioned to assist partner countries with further improvements to their education systems, especially in the areas of policy and management.

Australia's objective for education 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. This education policy aims by 2010 to assist developing countries increase by 10 million the number of children attending school and to improve the quality of education for an additional 50 million children.

*Better education* provides the detailed policy basis to meet the 2006 White Paper expectation that Australia will triple its support for education systems by 2010 from around \$100 million per year. This aid will be in addition to the Australian Government's ongoing support for scholarships (see page 8) and also for the new Australia-Pacific Technical College (see page 28).

While the focus of Australia's support will depend on the diverse needs in partner countries, the priorities for the Australian aid program are to:

- > improve the functioning of national education systems to enable more girls and boys to complete primary school and progress to higher levels of education
- > improve the relevance and quality of education, including in vocational and technical education, so that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for life and productive employment.

The policy also provides guidance on improving the effectiveness of our education assistance, by accelerating the shift away from stand-alone projects to broader sector programs that are closely aligned with partner governments' education plans, systems and processes. This change will also involve greater

harmonisation with other bilateral donors, UN agencies and international development banks.

Through its support, Australia will assist partner countries in the Asia-Pacific region to fulfil their commitments to international education goals.

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- > Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
- > Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

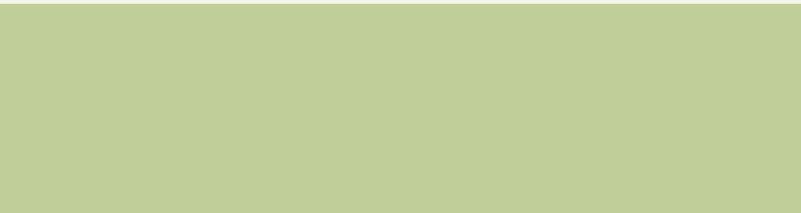
### EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS

- > Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- > Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality
- > Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs
- > Achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
- > Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
- > Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

*As a region, the Asia-Pacific is on its way to achieving the international education goals. However, progress is uneven and many countries still face significant education challenges.<sup>4</sup>*

*Better education* complements Australia's ongoing support for tertiary scholarships, including through the new Australian Government initiative *Australian Scholarships*. As well as meeting national needs, strengthening partner countries' education systems helps to expand the pool of students leaving school with the level of achievement necessary to compete for an Australian scholarship.

Scholarships foster enduring people-to-people links and build human capital in developing countries. As students study in many fields, scholarships have benefits across many sectors, well beyond the education sector.



ABOVE: *Australian Scholarships* continues the spirit of the Colombo Plan, bringing many benefits of common purpose and understanding to the Asia–Pacific region.  
PHOTO: AusAID

#### AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIPS<sup>5</sup>

AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIPS IS AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE ANNOUNCED AS PART OF THE 2006 WHITE PAPER ON OVERSEAS AID. OVER FIVE YEARS, FROM 1 JULY 2006, THE INITIATIVE WILL DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF EDUCATION AWARDS OFFERED FOR THE ASIA–PACIFIC REGION TO 19,000.

The goal of *Australian Scholarships* is to promote sustainable development and excellence in education in the Asia–Pacific region. It will provide educational, research and professional development opportunities to support the growth of the region and build enduring links at the individual, institutional and country levels.

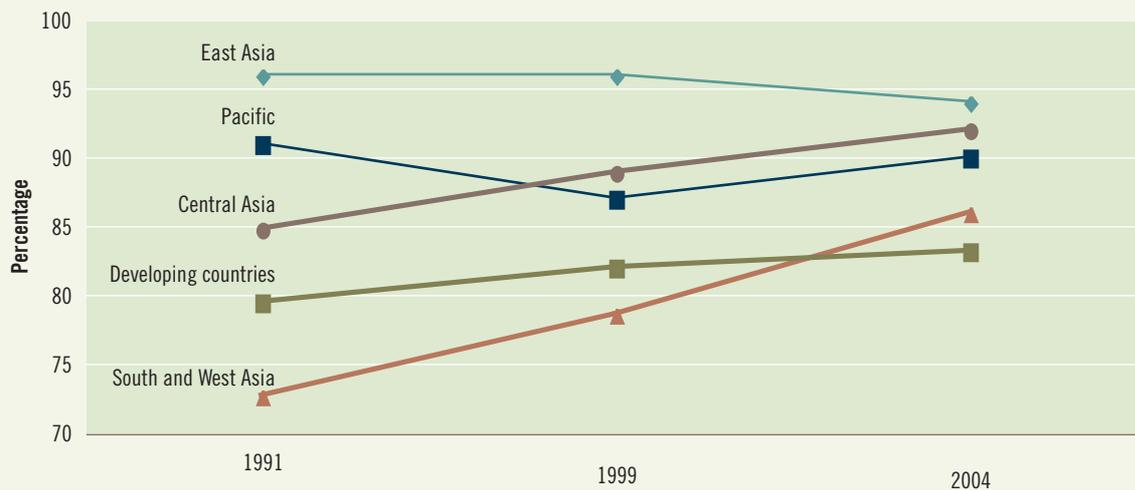
At a total value of \$1.4 billion, the *Australian Scholarships* initiative brings under one umbrella three Australian Government scholarship programs managed by AusAID and the Department of Education, Science and Training:

- > Australian Development Scholarships, enabling awardees from developing countries to study in Australia towards undergraduate, postgraduate or technical qualifications. These scholarships aim to generate economic growth, reduce poverty and strengthen human resource capacity by addressing skills shortages and achieving a critical mass of Australian trained scholars in priority sectors of partner countries.
- > Australian Leadership Awards aim to develop leadership and build partnerships and links within the Asia–Pacific region with the flexibility to address priority regional issues. The scholarships are for postgraduate studies in Australia at master or doctoral level and fellowships for short-term opportunities in specialised research, study or professional attachment to Australian organisations.
- > The Endeavour Programme, which enables high-achieving awardees to undertake short- or long-term study, research and professional development in Australia in a broad range of disciplines. It also enables Australians to do the same at institutions abroad.

## 2 Progress and challenges in the Asia–Pacific region

Enrolments in primary school in developing countries increased from 79 per cent in 1991 to 85 per cent in 2004.<sup>6</sup>

FIGURE 1: REGIONAL PRIMARY NET ENROLMENT RATES



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 5

FIGURE 2: CHANGE IN PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATES 1999–2004

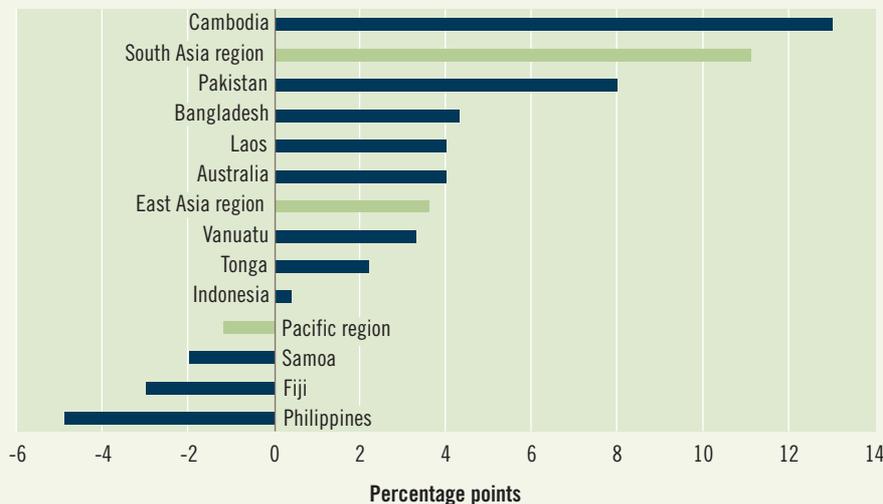
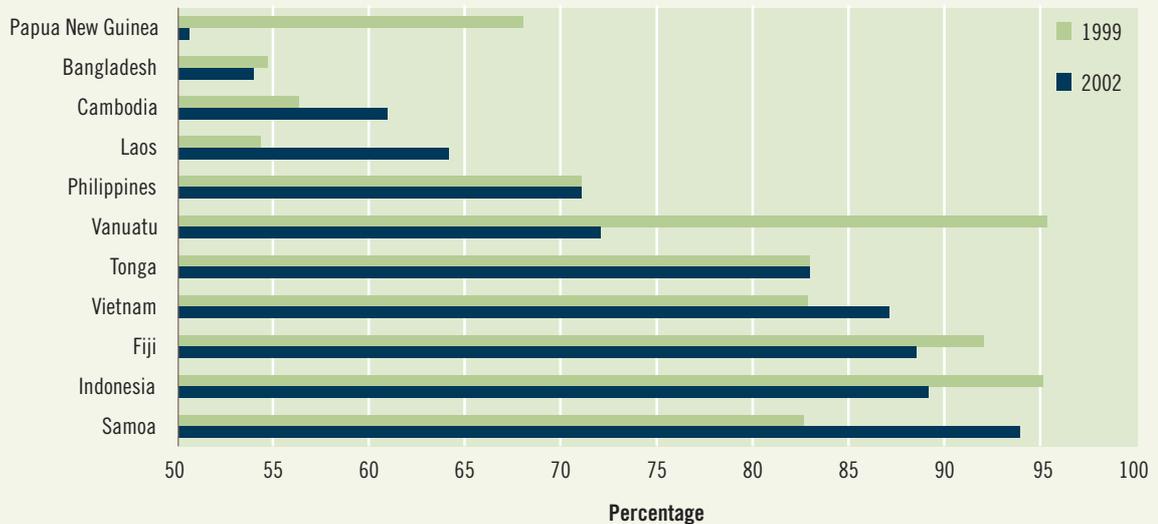


TABLE 1: PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATE 2004	
Cambodia	98
South Asia region	89.3
Pakistan	66.2
Bangladesh	93.8
Laos	84
Australia	96
East Asia region	94.1
Vanuatu	93.9
Tonga	93
Indonesia	94.3
Pacific region	79.6
Samoa	90
Fiji	96
Philippines	94

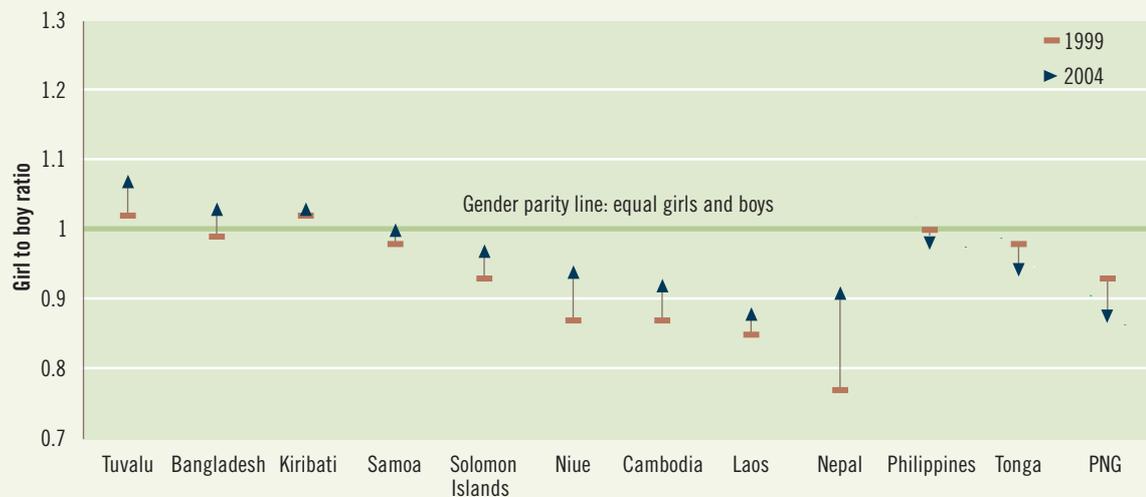
Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 & 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 5; UNSD Millennium Indicators Online Data

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMPLETING PRIMARY SCHOOL



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, UNESCO, Paris, 2005, Annex Table 7

FIGURE 4: GENDER DISPARITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS 1999–2004



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 5

The analysis of progress in education across the Asia–Pacific region is hampered by an acute shortage of reliable data for many countries. The statistics presented here are drawn from the most recent and authoritative sources available including the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007* and the 2006 report on the Millennium Development Goals. The information in these reports is derived from data provided by national governments, and can sometimes be inaccurate, incomplete or out of date.

A number of countries in the region now have primary enrolment rates above 90 per cent (See Figure 1). However, for some countries in the region progress has been more limited (See Figure 2). In the Philippines and Papua New Guinea, for example, governments have not been able to create sufficient school places to match rising populations and the growing demand for education.

There has also been mixed progress on increasing the number of children who complete school. While there have been gains in countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam, primary school completion rates are

FIGURE 5: DIFFERENCE IN LITERACY RATES 1990–2004



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 2

declining in Indonesia and across the Pacific, most significantly in Papua New Guinea (Figure 3).

Partly as a result of strong international support for girls' education, gender parity in primary schools in developing countries has been rising, with the ratio of girls to boys increasing from 86 per cent in 1991 to 95 per cent in 2004.<sup>7</sup> Despite this progress, girls' inequality remains an issue – of the region's 26 million children out of school, 16 million are girls.<sup>8</sup> In some countries, such as Papua New Guinea and Tonga, the situation for girls has worsened since 1999 (Figure 4).

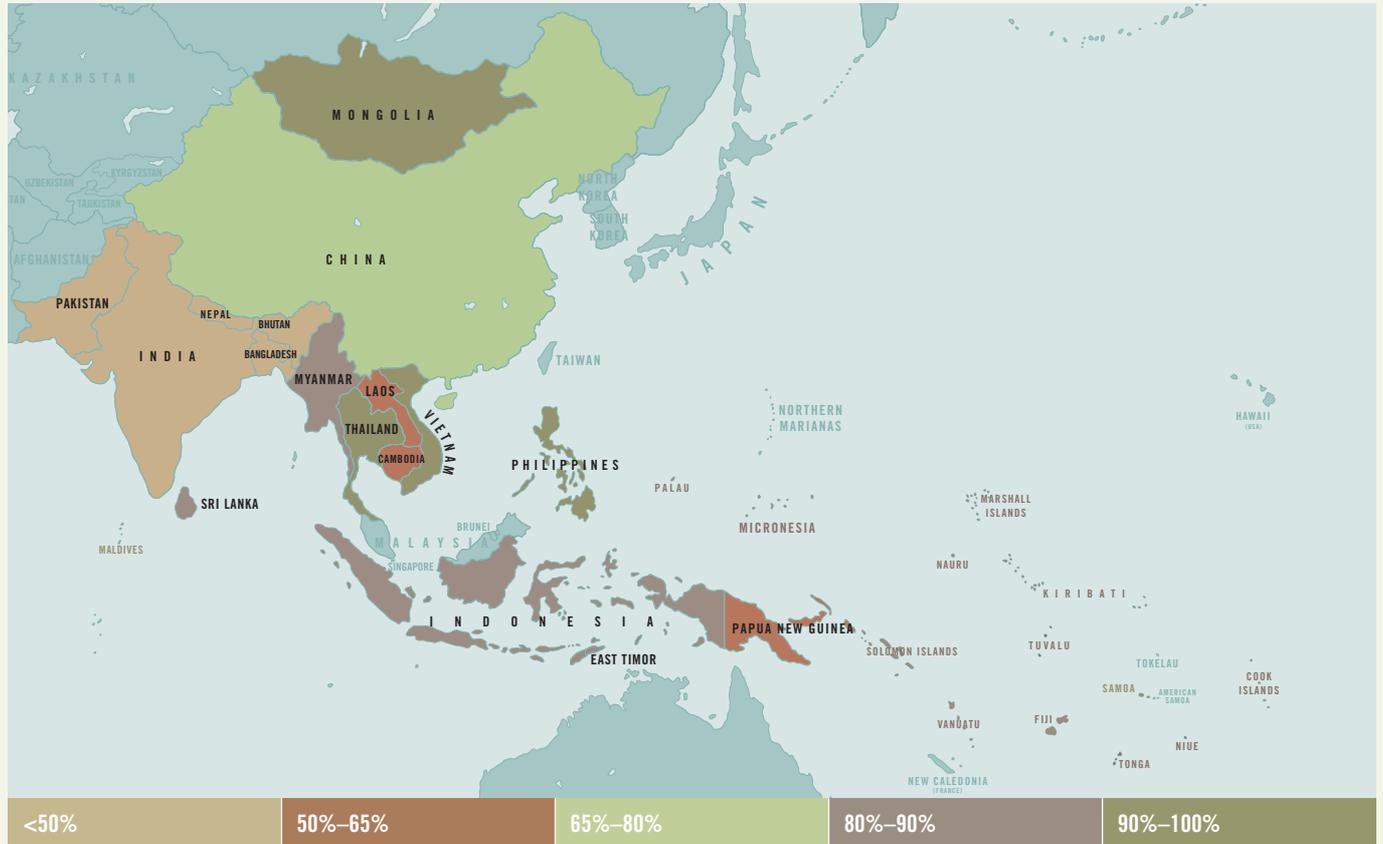
*Increased access to schooling over recent decades has played a key role in raising literacy rates across the Asia–Pacific region, as illustrated in Figure 5.<sup>9</sup>*

Although by many measures education outcomes have improved across the region, challenges remain, particularly as demand for education increases as populations continue to grow. While the specific needs for each country vary, three common challenges exist:

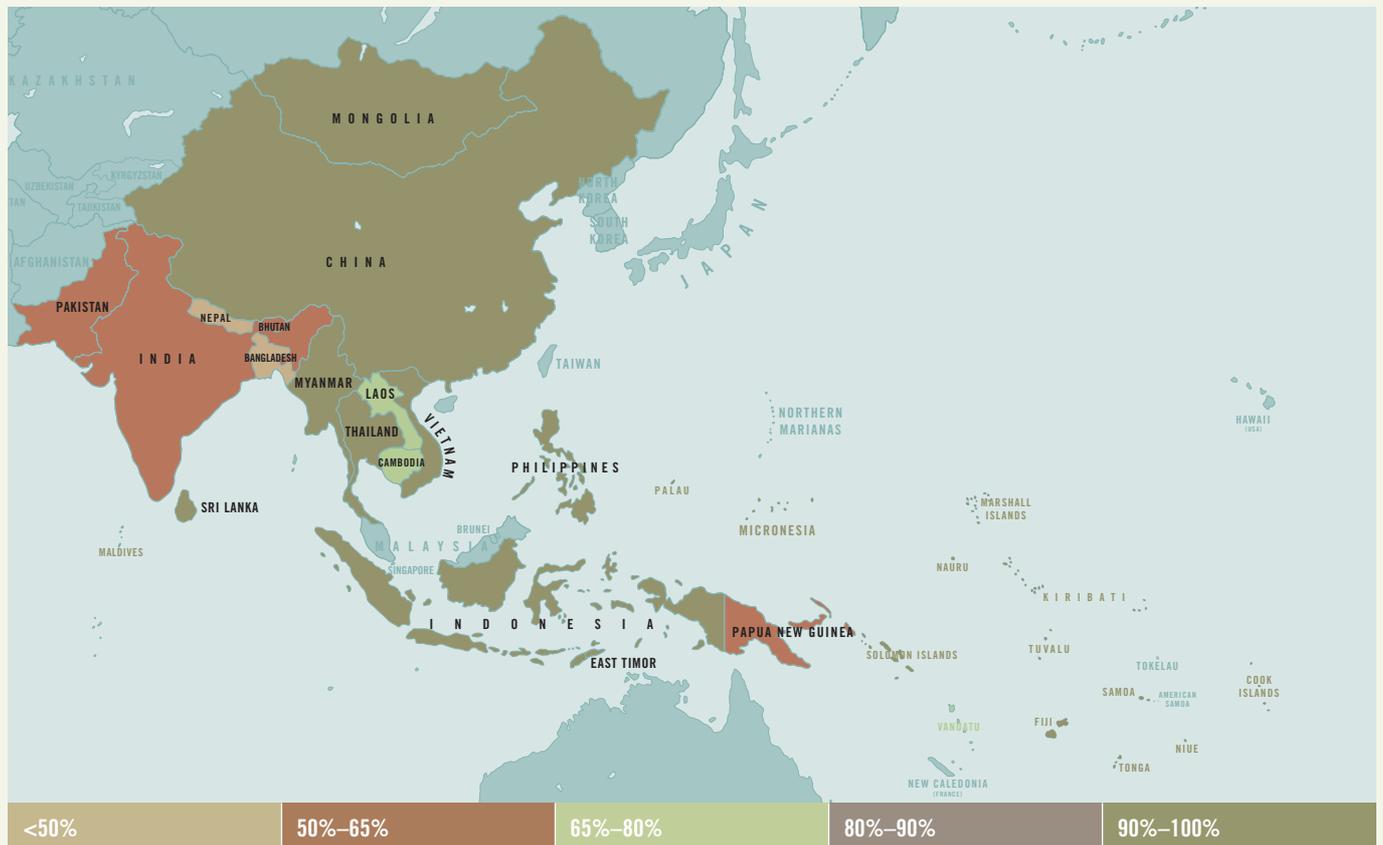
- > improving the governance of national education systems to improve policy decisions, increase efficiency and raise standards
- > expanding services to enable all girls and boys to complete a full course of primary school and provide opportunities to progress to higher levels of education, particularly into secondary school or vocational and technical courses
- > improving the quality and relevance of education, including in vocational and technical education, to realise the full economic and social benefits of education.

Despite increasing literacy rates it is estimated that 525 million adults in the Asia–Pacific region still cannot read or write. South and West Asia have not only some of the lowest literacy rates in the world but also the widest inequalities between women and men.

MAP 1: LITERACY RATES IN 1990



MAP 2: LITERACY RATES IN 2004



Source: *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007*, UNDP Human Development Report 2006, Millennium Development Goals Online Indicators

Note: This map uses international data for adult literacy rates for comparative purposes (alternative data sources may report varying statistics). Regional averages have been used in the absence of reliable country statistics.

It has been estimated that an additional US\$7 billion per year until 2015 is needed globally to boost education expenditure to meet international education goals.<sup>10</sup> While most of these funds must come from developing countries' domestic resources, donors can help fill the gap. However, money alone will not solve the problem. Donors must support developing countries to identify and manage essential reforms.

As part of *Australian Scholarships*, the inaugural Asia–Pacific Education Ministers' Meeting, hosted by Australia in Brisbane in April 2006, acknowledged the diversity of economies, resources, political structures and socio-cultural contexts across the region as well as significant differences in education systems.

In the Brisbane Communiqué, Ministers recognised that for many countries the highest priority still rests with the provision of basic education.<sup>11</sup> They also recognised the importance of vocational and technical education. Ministers agreed on the common goals of encouraging greater student and academic mobility, transferability of qualifications and greater integration or compatibility of education frameworks.

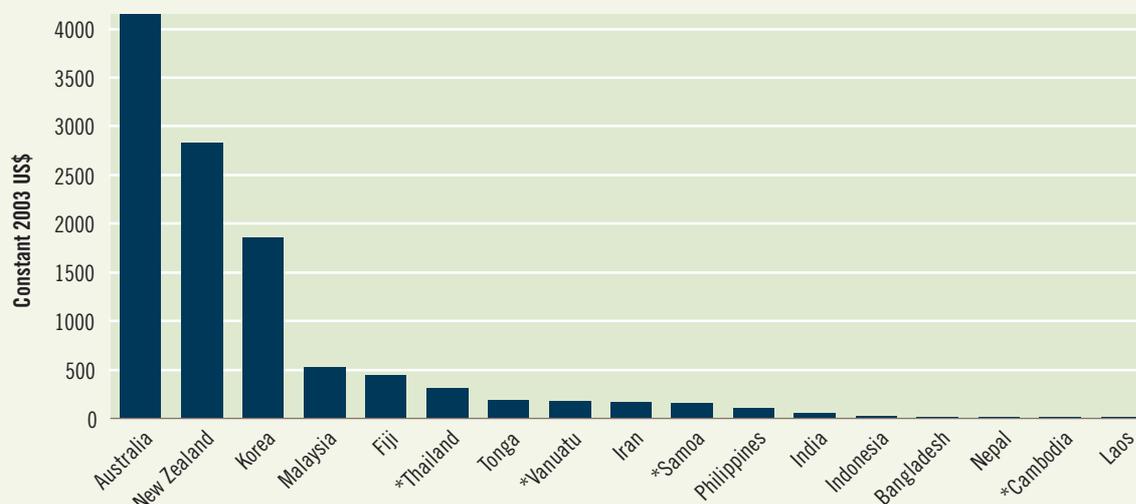
## GOVERNANCE OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Weaknesses in education service delivery largely result from a combination of resource constraints, poor policy decisions and ineffective government administration. While there has been growth in public expenditure on education, in some countries in the region the amount spent per student is still extremely low (Figure 6). National budget allocations to the education sector are often too small to meet national education goals and cover little more than teacher salaries (Figure 7). Few developing countries have managed to increase spending on education even to keep pace with population growth.

While all of Australia's partner countries in the Asia–Pacific region have made commitments to the international education goals, poor policy decisions work against achieving these targets. The distribution of funding within the education sector is often skewed against primary schooling, with the majority of public funding often channelled to secondary and tertiary education.

Fragmentation in policy making and implementation can also be problematic. In an effort to improve responsiveness, central governments have often devolved responsibility for delivering education to the regional or local level. In many cases, however, these lower levels of government lack the capacity to deliver effective services.

FIGURE 6: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT

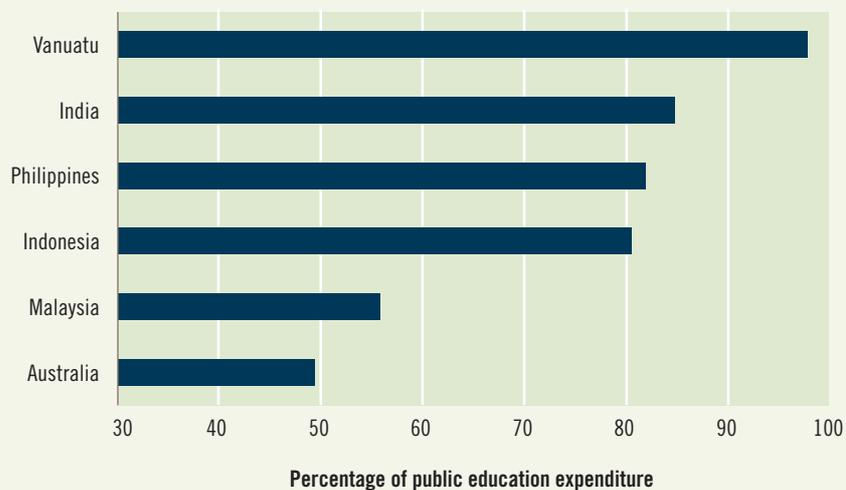


Source: *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 & 2007*, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 11, 14.  
\*Note: 2002 data



ABOVE: Building demand for better governance can occur through increasing community participation in planning and monitoring local schools. Here a Papua New Guinean community celebrates the opening of a new classroom built with funds provided by the Australian aid program. PHOTO: PNG–Australia Basic Education Development Project, Keith Stebbins

FIGURE 7: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON TEACHERS' SALARIES



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 11

Even at the national level, public oversight of education is often split between different government departments and agencies that do not work closely together. For example, in multilingual countries the policy to offer the early years of schooling in children's first language requires significant resources and is typically not supported by adequate public funding. In many countries, schooling, higher education and vocational and technical education are all managed by different ministries.

Ineffective public administration hinders the efficient distribution of resources for education service delivery. Already scarce resources are further eroded by wastage and corruption. Faced with unpredictable or low levels of public funding, many schools charge fees to cover operational expenses. School fees are a major obstacle to increasing enrolments and keeping children in school. They also disadvantage poor children, as the cost is beyond the means of impoverished households.

## THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON EDUCATION

Corruption in the education sector reduces the resources available for schooling, limiting access and driving down quality, as well as reducing public confidence and demand. Key areas susceptible to corruption are:

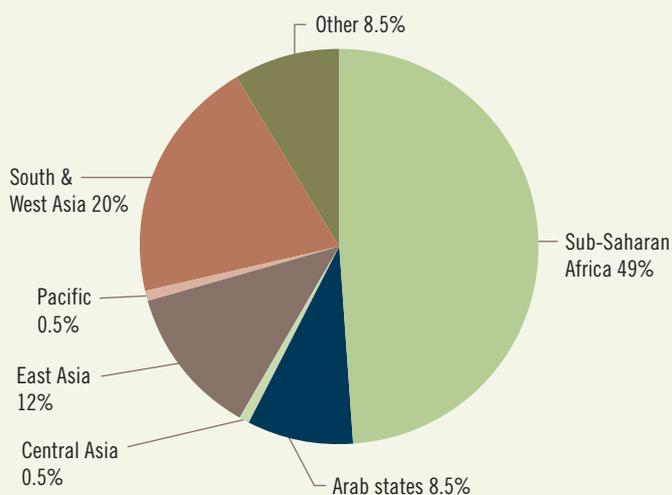
- > **planning and school management** – including manipulation of finances
- > **procurement and distribution** – particularly nepotism in awarding contracts for supply of school materials and fraud in contract execution
- > **student selection and exam results** – including bribery for admission to a particular school or academic institution, and exchange of money or other favours for good grades
- > **teacher management, personnel systems and professional misconduct** – particularly in the filling of vacancies, transfers and promotions
- > **accreditation of schools and other academic institutions** – including the payment of fees and other bribes to achieve accreditation or formal recognition.

## ENROLMENT AND RETENTION IN SCHOOL

Of the 77 million school-age children out of school globally in 2004, almost 26 million lived in the Asia–Pacific region (Figure 8). Many of these children dropped out before completing their education, but most never had the opportunity to go to school. While enrolment rates have been rising, most countries in the Asia–Pacific region are still some way from providing all children with a primary education and enrolments at secondary level are often very low. In 2004, the secondary enrolment rate was 68 per cent in the Pacific, and only 45 per cent in South and West Asia.<sup>12</sup>

Providing access to schooling for all children is a significant challenge, particularly for rural communities and minority ethnic groups (Figure 9). For instance in the Indonesian province of Papua, the junior secondary enrolment rate is reportedly 20 per cent below the national average.<sup>13</sup> If schools are located beyond easy reach of their catchment communities, there is a major disincentive for attendance. In many countries, students with special needs are unlikely to receive any schooling at all.

FIGURE 8: OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY REGION



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2006, Annex Table 5

*Children who speak a minority language and those from marginalised groups routinely receive the least effective education.*

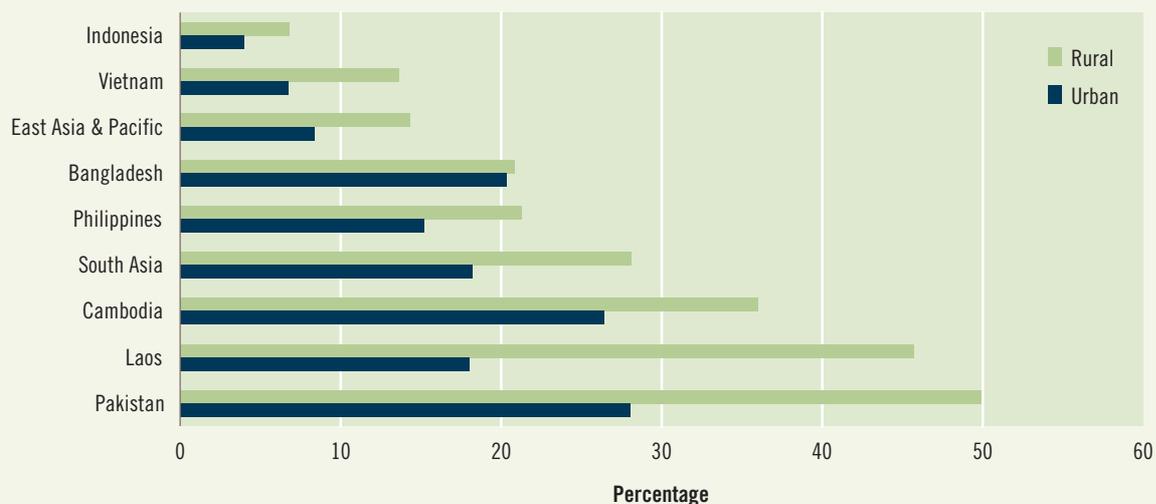
*High rates of poverty in rural areas limit educational opportunities because of demands for children's labour, low levels of parent education and lack of access to good quality schooling.<sup>14</sup>*

Strong links between schools and their communities are essential. Not only does students' learning achievement improve when school management is accountable to local families, but community support can also help address economic, cultural, gender and institutional barriers to enrolment. In countries such as the Philippines, establishing a system for local school management is central to reform efforts.

As a major community resource, schools provide an opportunity to improve health outcomes for the broader population. Low-cost preventive health programs such as school nutrition programs can encourage attendance and improve learning. In Laos, Australia has successfully worked with UNICEF and the World Food Programme to integrate school feeding and hygiene education into education programs so that children are both healthier and learn more.

While the state typically provides the majority of basic education services, significant contributions are also made by the private sector and by faith-based and other non-government organisations. In Indonesia, up to 15 per cent of students (around 6 million children) attend private Islamic schools. In Papua New Guinea, 40 per cent of government schools are operated by Christian church agencies. The involvement of non-government organisations is particularly important in places affected by conflict and in countries where the functions of the state are weak.

FIGURE 9: SHARE OF RURAL AND URBAN CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, *Children Out of School Report*, 2005

RIGHT: A boy walking home from school. Across the region many mothers and children walk as far as five kilometres each way over difficult terrain and at considerable personal risk to attend school. PHOTO: Panos Pictures, Qilai Shen

BELOW: Getting the remaining junior secondary-aged population into school is one of Indonesia's major sector challenges. PHOTO: AusAID





TOP: A young Hmong boy is learning to read at school in Laos. Australia co-chairs an education working group with the Ministry of Education in Laos. The group is working to strengthen the school system for the benefit of students and teachers.  
PHOTO: Panos Pictures, Liba Taylor

BOTTOM: In the Philippines, Australia has assisted with the introduction of school-based management involving communities being accountable for developing, implementing and monitoring school improvement plans.  
PHOTO: AusAID, Basic Education Assistance to Mindanao Project

## QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION

Good quality and relevance underpin the value of education. How well students are taught and how much they learn have a crucial impact on attendance and whether children complete their schooling. The quality of education is a major factor in parents' decisions to send their children to school.

In much of the Asia–Pacific region there is concern that many of the 334 million children in school are leaving without essential literacy, numeracy and problem-solving abilities.<sup>16</sup>

Secondary school leavers often lack the skills they need for further study or work. A lack of skilled workers limits economic development, constrains investment and contributes to inefficiency in government and business.

*In many parts of the world, an enormous gap persists between the numbers of students graduating from school and those among them who master a minimum set of cognitive skills. Any policy aimed at pushing net enrolments towards 100% must also assure decent learning conditions.<sup>15</sup>*

## MEASURING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Tracking the quality of education is complicated by a lack of objective and consistent measures of how much children learn at school. Data from national examinations are often undermined by the practice of adjusting scores to meet pass rates and by concerns over cheating. International comparative tests are more reliable but cost limits them to small sample studies. Literacy rates provide an essentially historical picture of how much adults learned when they were children.

The assessment of quality is therefore usually based on proxy indicators. The proportion of qualified teachers has an influence on quality and is one of the most common proxy indicators. Completion rates have also been found to be closely correlated with quality since children are more willing to stay at school if they are given a good education.

With relatively low numbers of students progressing to higher levels of education, partner countries need to ensure that each level of schooling is valuable in its own right, in addition to providing a stepping stone to further studies or the workforce. This is particularly important in vocational and technical education where many countries are struggling to transform ineffective training systems.

English language skills are crucial to participation in the international economy. In the Asia–Pacific region, English is the main language of trade and commerce, information communication technologies, higher education and tourism. Many of Australia's partner countries need help in enhancing English language proficiency as part of broader development efforts.

## GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Gender equality is an overarching principle for the Australian aid program.<sup>17</sup>

Girls are more likely than boys to miss out on education. Poverty, gender roles, cultural traditions, HIV/AIDS and armed conflict are all constraints on the education of girls. In some societies, parents do not see value in investing in a daughter's education, and many poor families keep girls at home to contribute to domestic income. Improving gender equality in education often requires a reduction in the costs to families of educating girls. Ensuring that school infrastructure meets basic standards, such as separate sanitation facilities, is essential.

Gender equality must also address the needs of boys. In parts of the Asia-Pacific region, substantially more boys than girls drop out of school in later years, either to work or, conversely, because they perceive their education to be of no value in securing employment. Boys are also at risk of leaving school to become involved in gangs or more serious military conflict.

It is vital that a country's education system contributes to broader gender equality. Teachers require the knowledge and skills to tackle gender issues; the curriculum and textbooks need to reflect gender equality; and both women and men must be involved as teachers and in the management of schools.



ABOVE: Nearly one out of every five girls who enrol in primary school in developing countries do not complete a primary education. PHOTO: AusAID

**BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE**

Important lessons for improving the effectiveness of assistance in education can be drawn from the experience of Australia and other donors over the past decade.

<p><b>The full benefits of education are only realised if schooling extends to all children within the population.</b> In many countries benefits are reduced because girls, children from rural areas, ethnic and linguistic minorities, and special needs children are marginalised.</p>	<p>In the northern tribal areas of Pakistan, the education of girls is restricted on religious grounds and in some areas fewer than 10 per cent of women are literate. Australian support for girls’ education in Balochistan province, in partnership with UNICEF, has increased the number of girls aged between five and seven attending schools in remote districts.</p>
<p><b>Support for education should focus on improving learning achievements.</b> Ensuring all boys and girls complete primary school will not necessarily ensure achievement of the basic literacy and numeracy required for poverty reduction. Similarly, completion of higher levels of education, including vocational education, does not ensure usable skills in the workforce.</p>	<p>In the Philippines, despite high enrolment rates, national learning achievement tests indicate that up to 40 per cent of children retain little of what they were taught in primary school. Australia is working with disadvantaged communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to improve the quality of education and help ensure that children gain useful and durable skills.</p>
<p><b>Support for education must reflect the strong interdependencies within the sector.</b> Good quality in the early years of schooling improves the amount children learn in later years; opportunities to progress to secondary and tertiary education increase enrolment and completion rates at lower levels.</p>	<p>Indonesia has an enrolment rate of more than 90 per cent in primary education, but only 57 per cent at secondary level. Australia is working with the Indonesian Government to expand access to junior secondary school, improve the quality of education, and enable children to progress to higher levels of education or into the workforce.</p>
<p><b>Weak education performance is generally due to underlying problems with resources, structures and incentives rather than simply a lack of technical capacity.</b> Technical assistance and training have a greater impact when complemented by initiatives to strengthen national systems and improve policy making.</p>	<p>Although the education system in Papua New Guinea has expanded rapidly in the last decade, less than half of all children attend school. Australia is supporting the national Department of Education to modify systems and practices, to allocate resources efficiently, and to work more effectively with partners, including central agencies, provincial governments, churches and communities.</p>

The effectiveness of aid depends on coordination with all other investments in the sector and whole-of-government approaches for both donors and partners. Duplications, gaps and inconsistencies create inefficiencies that hamper education service delivery and reduce the impact of aid. Improvements in performance require continuing efforts to harmonise the activities of government, donors, non-government organisations and the private sector.

International evidence demonstrates that a proliferation of separate donor-supported projects undermines development effectiveness and that initiatives are only sustainable when closely coordinated. In all education aid programs, Australia is increasingly focused on harmonisation with other donors and ensuring that activities are aligned with partner government policies and priorities.

*There is practically no problem in education that does not have a solution already tried and tested elsewhere.*<sup>18</sup>



ABOVE: These young school girls in the Philippines attend Sta. Paz Norte high school where an Oxfam project supported by Australia is helping teachers to educate students about the importance of health and sanitation. The project is working in Southern Leyte, where a landslide caused tremendous damage to local communities in 2006. PHOTO: AusAID

### 3 What Australia will support

Education is key to creating, applying, and spreading new ideas and technologies which in turn are critical for sustained growth; it augments cognitive and other skills, which in turn increase labor productivity. The expansion of educational opportunity is a ‘win-win’ strategy.<sup>19</sup>

Australia will assist partner governments in the Asia–Pacific region to improve the performance of their national education systems so that more girls and boys receive a better education. We will also assist with meeting specific regional needs in vocational and technical education, Islamic education and English language skills development, where Australian experience can make a difference.

#### HELPING EDUCATION SYSTEMS DELIVER

Education systems involve different levels of government and both public and private service providers. Governments play a key role by establishing the regulatory and policy framework and managing public investment in the sector. In all countries, the enabling inputs for education service delivery include human resources – particularly teachers – physical infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials (Figure 10).

To improve the delivery of education services in partner countries, Australia will assist with improving the governance of education systems as well as strengthening the delivery of education services.

FIGURE 10: EDUCATION SYSTEM COMPONENTS

	GOVERNANCE	SERVICE DELIVERY
INSTITUTIONS	Government departments	Schools
	Central agencies	Vocational and technical institutions
	Ministries of education	Higher education
	Other relevant ministries	Non-formal
	Provincial agencies	
	School management boards	
ELEMENTS	Funds	Teachers
	Policies	Curriculum
	Legislation	Materials
	Management systems	Buildings



ABOVE: A policy of using local materials in school construction and teaching has reduced the cost of elementary education in Papua New Guinea. PHOTO: AusAID

### IMPROVING THE GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

For governments, in their multiple roles as regulators, funders, managers and providers of education services, the issues are complex. In the early stages of decentralisation, provincial governments not only need to fully understand their role, but must also have the capacity, resources and management systems in place to perform their functions effectively. In most countries bureaucratic structures require coordination across levels of government, between government departments responsible for different types of education and between public and private service providers. At the school level, it is essential that resources are managed transparently and accountably.

*The nature of primary education, with the high potential returns to society, argues for a central role for government ... experience shows that only government can ensure universal, equitable and sustainable provision.<sup>20</sup>*

To support improved governance of education systems Australia will:

- > strengthen partners' policy capacity including in securing and efficiently applying public funding for education, and mobilising funds from other sources
- > help partners strengthen the full range of government systems (including provincial systems and those covering the private sector) from planning and budgeting to financial management and procurement, to school and teacher regulation and accreditation, to teacher deployment and materials distribution
- > help partners develop sustainable education management information systems and the capacity to collect and report data, to ensure that accurate data are available for policy making and evaluation
- > support social accountability measures that strengthen school-based management, facilitate informed participation in education reform, and promote greater demand for equitable public resource allocation and better government administration
- > support partners to implement sanctions (including legal penalties) for corruption in education programs as well as introduce codes of conduct.

## EDUCATION IN FRAGILE STATES

International literature defines ‘fragile states’ as countries where governments are unable or unwilling to provide basic services to the broader population. This may be because of economic crisis, political instability, conflict or natural disaster. It has been estimated that as many as one-third to one-half of children out of school live in fragile states, and that gender inequalities in these states are greater than elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

Australia’s support to education in fragile states balances assistance for immediate basic service delivery with long-term capacity building of key government organisations. In strengthening education service delivery, Australia works with partner governments, non-government agencies (for example, church groups) and communities. At the same time, Australia works to build the capacity of partner governments to develop education policy, and to plan and budget for sustainable education service delivery.

## STRENGTHENING SERVICE DELIVERY

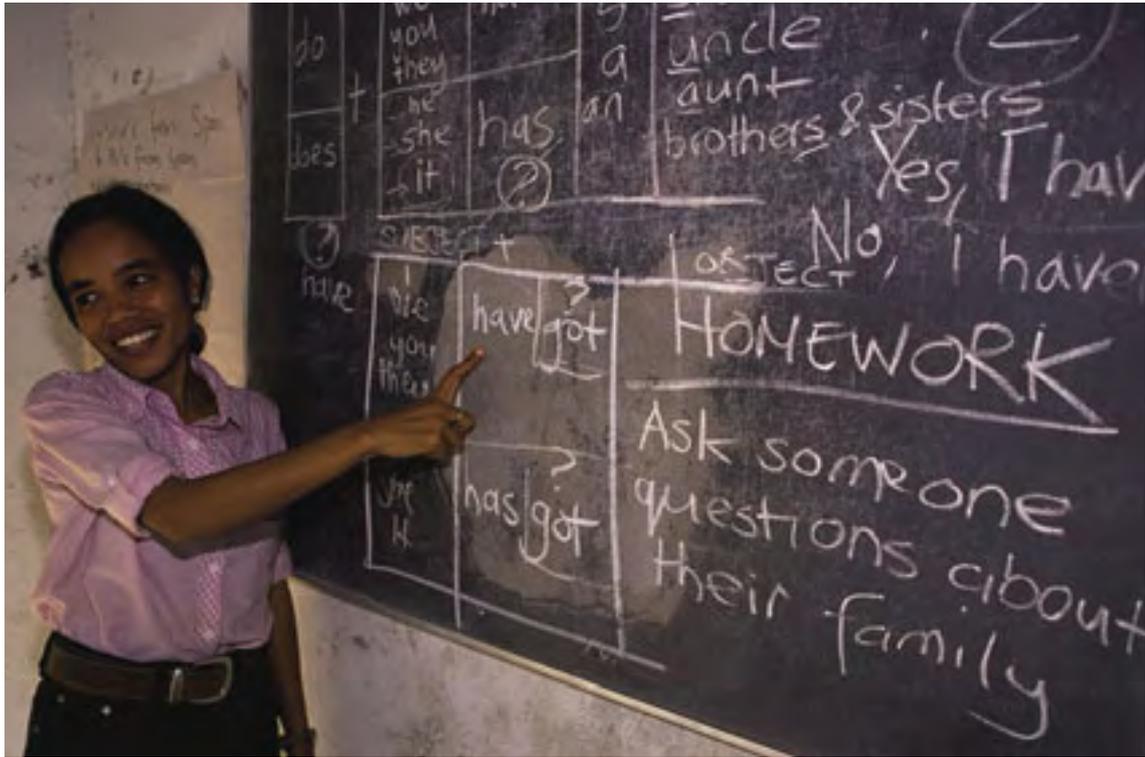
As well as improving sector governance, achieving better education for children will require more effective service delivery. Improving the performance of teachers is fundamental, as is improving the supply of relevant and affordable materials for use inside and outside schools. Ensuring curriculum is relevant to local needs will help to increase children’s participation in school and improve the quality of teaching.

Infrastructure – buildings, facilities and equipment – is another key input that is often lacking, but that needs to be in place and maintained to enable learning to occur. School food programs and other incentive schemes can also be effective ways of promoting attendance and supporting learning at school. School scholarship schemes have been found to be particularly effective in improving girls’ attendance records.



ABOVE: The Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development’s primary objective is to support Indonesia’s reconstruction and development efforts, both in and beyond tsunami-affected areas. This junior secondary school in Lombok, an island in West Nusa Tenggara province near Bali, is being reconstructed with funds provided by the Australian Government.

PHOTO: AusAID, Karen Ingram



ABOVE: A teacher giving a lesson at a school in Dili. After the referendum where the East Timorese people voted for independence, a wave of violence erupted and 95 per cent of schools were damaged. Significant progress has been made since then. Many schools have been rehabilitated and enrolments are increasing, but much remains to be done to rebuild the education system.

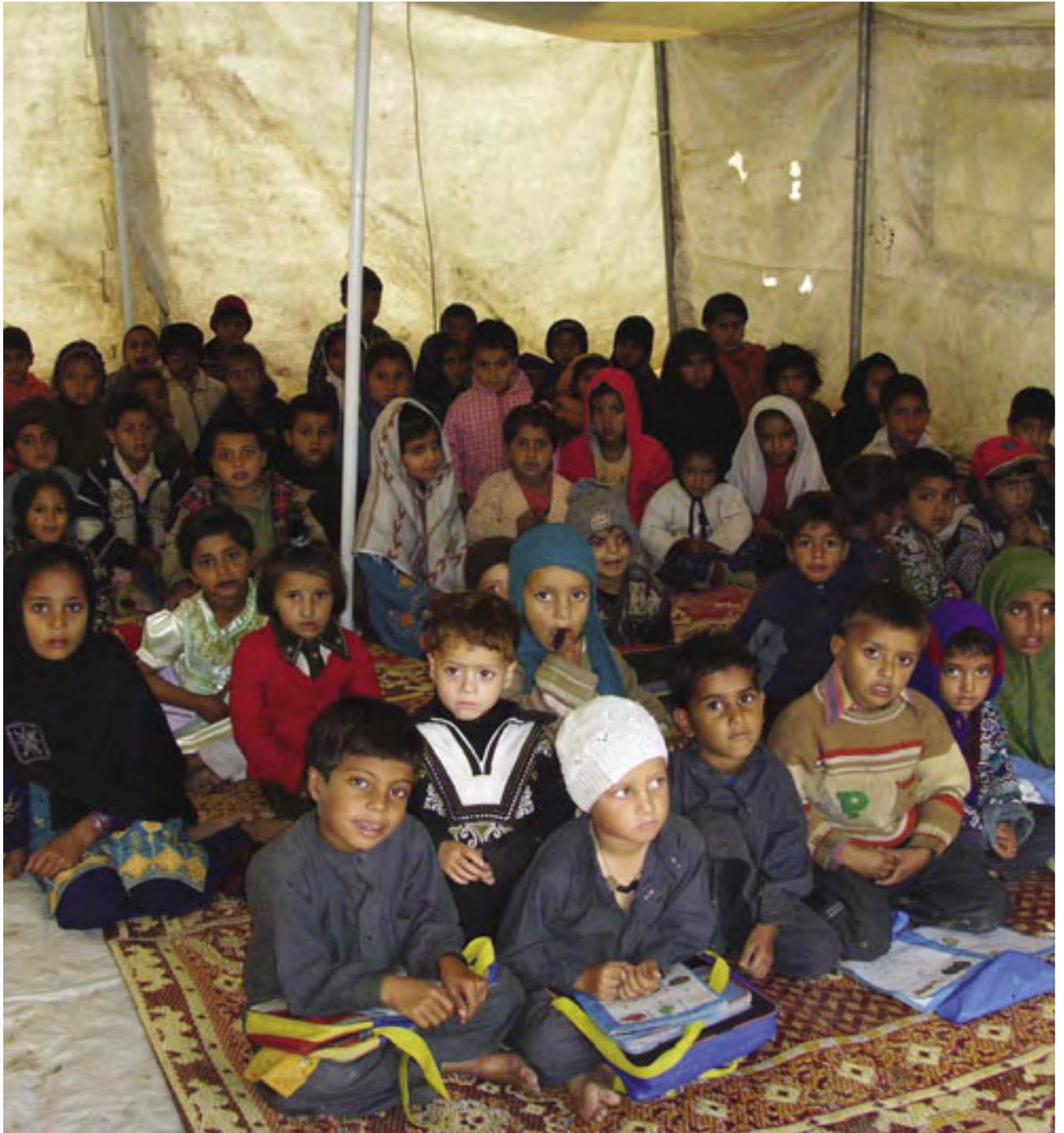
PHOTO: AusAID

To strengthen service delivery Australia will:

- > support pre-service and in-service training for teachers in partner countries and help reform deployment and employment policies in order to enhance the incentives for teachers to be in the classroom and teaching effectively
- > support curriculum review and reform and help develop appropriate learning materials, including using technology, that underpin quality education
- > help partner countries to formulate policies for providing textbooks and develop cost-effective methods for distributing learning materials
- > support targeted programs of school construction and sustainable systems for maintenance
- > trial innovative ways to encourage children to complete their education
- > support health initiatives within schools to improve learning and also to promote healthy behaviours, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition and personal hygiene
- > support the re-establishment of schooling as quickly as possible following natural disasters or other emergencies and build domestic capacity to respond.

#### BETTER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Between 2006 and 2012 Australia will provide \$252 million in loans and grants for community construction of around 2000 junior secondary schools. A key feature of the assistance is that a significant proportion of funding will be delivered directly by Indonesian Government institutions, as well as private foundations and communities. Measures to promote accountability and transparency and reduce the risk of corruption have been explicitly built into the program. Australia will strengthen financial safeguards by helping to improve Indonesian financial management, procurement, audit and community monitoring systems. In addition, Australia's program will support the Indonesian Government's own anti-corruption efforts, as set out in its five-year reform strategy for education.



ABOVE: Following the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005, Australia supported a UNICEF program to provide school tent structures to minimise the impact of the disaster on children's education. PHOTO: AusAID, Fabia Shah

## MEETING SPECIFIC REGIONAL NEEDS

Australia will meet specific regional needs, particularly in addressing labour market skill shortages and improving Islamic education and English language teaching.

## IMPROVING VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

There are large numbers of unemployed youth across the region, for example in East Timor and in the Pacific region. While vocational training on its own will not create jobs, raising skills can help stimulate economic growth and improve employability for those trained.

Australia is acknowledged as a world leader in vocational and technical education. The effectiveness of Australian interventions in partner countries will depend on broader reforms. In many cases this will involve a move away from supply models in which students are offered standardised time-bound courses, to more flexible and effective systems driven by demand from industry. This is a long-term process requiring partner countries to commit to an extended change process. Australia will:

- > assist partner countries to reform their vocational and technical education systems to improve their relevance for today's domestic and international job markets
- > improve employability in the Pacific region and raise vocational and technical skills to international standards through the establishment of the new Australia–Pacific Technical College.

## AUSTRALIA–PACIFIC TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The new Australia–Pacific Technical College is a \$149.5 million initiative that will deliver training and Australian-standard qualifications to Pacific Islanders to increasingly integrate countries in the Pacific region with the international economy. The intention to establish the college was announced by Australia's Prime Minister at the Pacific Islands Forum in 2005. Pacific leaders at the 2006 Forum welcomed progress on establishment of the college.

The college aims to support the growth of Pacific Island economies by providing training for larger and better-skilled workforces. Graduates will benefit from improved employment opportunities at home and abroad in an increasingly international labour market.

Consistent with modern trends in vocational and technical education, Australia will adopt innovative and flexible approaches and ensure that close links and partnerships are developed with industry. The college will be responsive to industry needs, focusing on training 'work-ready graduates' for in-demand occupations. Opportunities will be provided for both women and men, in a range of locations and modes across the region.

*The level of competence of a country's skilled workers and technicians is a key determinant of labour force flexibility and productivity.<sup>22</sup>*

## SUPPORTING ISLAMIC EDUCATION

In parts of the region (for example, Indonesia, Mindanao in the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh) Islamic schooling is a significant element of the education system. The quality of education provided by Islamic schools is important for achieving overall national education objectives.

Australia has had recent success in working in the Islamic sector in both Indonesia and the Philippines where we are assisting with improving school management and the teaching of secular subjects such as mathematics, English and science. Australia has substantial domestic experience in the funding and accreditation of private schools. Building on this experience, Australia will:

- > continue to provide support to improve the quality of education in Islamic schools to assist school leavers enhance their job opportunities and increase their ability to contribute to social cohesion and development.

## ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

In Indonesia the Islamic sub-sector contributes basic education services through private Islamic schools – *madrasah* (day schools) and *pesantren* (boarding institutions). In 2006 there were some 40,000 Islamic schools registered under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, of which 4,000 were state-owned. Together these accommodated about six million school-age children. There is a high level of female participation in Islamic schools (50 per cent or above). Many Islamic schools are supported by poorer communities and the great majority of parents who send their children to these schools are from the 40 million Indonesians who live below the poverty line.

Australian support aims to narrow the quality divide between public schools and private Islamic schools in selected poor districts. Our strategies include building the capacity of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to fulfil its quality development functions and providing support for the professional development of teachers.



ABOVE: Private Islamic schools in Indonesia educate millions of school-age children and are prominent community organisations. The late Allison Sudradjat, who was head of AusAID in Indonesia, met young students from one such school in Banda Aceh. MIN Merduati school was damaged in the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami and rebuilt with Australian funding.

PHOTO: AusAID

### IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Australia has a long history of, and well-developed strengths in, English language training. With the rising demand for English language skills across the region, Australia has an opportunity to assist partners to improve their English language proficiency. This will enable greater development of local economies, for example through the tourism and hospitality sector and through increased participation in the global economy. Australia will assist by:

- > improving the teaching of English in schools.  
Consistent with our overall approach to education

system development, sector programs will include English language components where it is a priority for partner governments. This will be the case where English is the language of instruction, such as in the Pacific region, or where it is a priority as a second language, such as in Indonesia and the Philippines

- > supporting English language initiatives that expose a broad group of people to English language training.



ABOVE: A sign painter copies the word 'English' from a textbook since he does not speak English himself. Across the region, Australia will support the teaching of English by using Australia's proven expertise in the areas of curriculum and material development, and teaching methods. PHOTO: Panos Pictures, Mark Henley

## 4 Increasing the effectiveness of aid

In recent years, donors have given a renewed emphasis to the importance of their relationships with partner governments and, in particular, to placing nationally designed country strategies at the heart of the development process.<sup>23</sup>

Australia's education assistance will contribute to the 2006 White Paper commitment to improve the effectiveness of Australia's aid program through strengthening its performance orientation, addressing corruption in the sector, enhancing engagement with governments in the region, and working more closely with partners, particularly other donors and whole-of-government partners.

### STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE ORIENTATION

Australia's assistance for education will continue to be delivered primarily through country programs. To improve the performance orientation of education support, country strategies will incorporate more detailed sectoral analysis to underpin their education strategies. This will include an assessment of any underlying systemic weaknesses that are contributing to poor education indicators. Country-level investigation will be supported by an increase in research into key educational issues in the region funded by the aid program.

The effectiveness of our assistance will be improved through a major change in approach to implementation with an accelerated shift to more sector programs in which there is greater alignment between Australian assistance and partner government education plans and strategies.

Performance reporting will also be improved. AusAID will prepare an annual state of the education sector report that will include sectoral and country information and describe progress in line with our

policy objective. The sector report will feed into the Annual Review of Development Effectiveness provided to the Australian Parliament.

As a first principle, Australia's reporting will be drawn from partner countries' own monitoring and reporting systems and based on key internationally recognised indicators. However, the state of the sector report also provides the opportunity to more fully explore performance, especially where there are conflicting data sources. It will be essential to ensure all data on national education systems are disaggregated by gender and, in some countries, by other demographic factors such as ethnicity.

Performance assessment will be based on the monitoring framework outlined on page 32, which incorporates quantitative and qualitative data and includes both direct and proxy indicators. Country-level monitoring and reporting will vary and will be drawn from individual country program performance assessment frameworks. Australian support will focus on assisting countries to meet key international benchmarks, for example: a national budget allocation of 20 per cent to education; student-teacher ratios of no more than 40:1; and a score of at least 4 on the annual World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment.

All Australian support for education will need to demonstrate how it contributes to improving system performance and how it will lead to sustainable improvements in the number of children in school and the quality of education students receive.

## MONITORING FRAMEWORK

PLANNED OUTCOMES	MONITORING INDICATORS
<p>MORE GIRLS AND BOYS IN THE ASIA–PACIFIC REGION ARE ACCESSING BETTER EDUCATION SERVICES</p>	<p><b>Enrolment rates</b> at primary and secondary school levels</p> <p><b>Gender parity</b> at all levels of education</p> <p><b>Completion rates</b> at primary and secondary school levels</p> <p><b>Literacy rates</b> in all age groups</p>
<p>THE GOVERNANCE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS IS IMPROVING, SERVICES ARE DELIVERED MORE EFFECTIVELY AND SPECIFIC REGIONAL NEEDS ARE MET</p>	<p><b>Education financing</b> including public expenditure, private financing and aid flows within the sector</p> <p><b>Public sector management</b> in terms of the quality of regulatory policy, public administration and financial management, and the implementation of anti-corruption measures</p> <p><b>School management</b> especially in terms of the proportion of schools with functioning local management committees</p> <p><b>Efficiency measures</b> such as the student–teacher ratio, the proportion of qualified teachers in the teaching force and the results of national and international testing</p> <p><b>Program outputs</b> 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</p>
<p>AUSTRALIAN AID IS BEING DELIVERED MORE EFFECTIVELY</p>	<p><b>Funding levels</b> encompassing all Australian aid flows to education</p> <p><b>Policy coherence</b> between aid program policies (especially education, gender and anti-corruption), AusAID country strategies and whole-of-government policy</p> <p><b>Impact</b> of individual initiatives in line with the Australian aid effectiveness reporting tool</p> <p><b>Approach</b> in terms of the alignment of Australian support with partner government priorities and plans, donor harmonisation and whole-of-government involvement</p>

## SECTOR PROGRAMS IN EDUCATION

Australia will continue recent moves towards integrating broader sector programs with partner governments' systems and policies. While timelines will vary, the long-term aim is to ensure that 'all significant funding in the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure program, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds'.<sup>24</sup> The development of sector programs generally requires progress on three fronts.

- i. Partner governments take the lead in partnerships with donor agencies and other contributors to the education sector such as non-government and faith-based organisations.
- ii. Partner governments produce prioritised and costed annual plans that identify how the total envelope of resources available to the education sector – from government, donors and other sources – will be deployed.
- iii. Donor agencies commit to greater reliance on partner governments' own systems for monitoring and reporting and for disbursing and accounting for funds.

While the focus of sector programs is usually at the national government level, in countries with decentralised responsibilities for service delivery, it is essential to engage with lower levels of the administration and it may be necessary to develop separate sector programs with selected provincial or regional administrations.



ABOVE: Children at an indigenous learning centre in the Philippines. Australia and the World Bank are working with the Government of the Philippines on a national reform program to improve the quality of basic education for all Filipino children.

PHOTO: AusAID

## COMBATING CORRUPTION

Reducing corruption is essential to enable partner governments to achieve their commitments to education. Efforts to improve governance and combat corruption play an important role in supporting broader education sector reforms. Education also offers a vehicle for enhancing transparency and accountability. Australia will integrate anti-corruption measures in its education support. With the shift towards broader sector programs in education, Australia will also help strengthen partner government systems, including public financial management and procurement systems.

## ENHANCING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

The policy focus on improving national education systems combined with the accelerated shift to sector programs will require much closer policy relationships with governments in the region as well as enhanced partnerships with other donors and whole-of-government partners.

Australia's approach to aid delivery will see stronger partnerships between AusAID and the Department of Education, Science and Training as well as state and territory government education departments.

*The effectiveness of a donor's assistance in a partner country is affected by the nature of the institutional framework for its relations with the partner government and with other donors, and by its own internal rules and culture.<sup>25</sup>*

These partnerships will optimise the use of Australia's technical expertise in aid activities and also improve long-term links between Australian and developing country education institutions at all levels.

Within the Asia–Pacific region Australia will develop strong relationships with national governments, lower levels of government, non-government providers of education and, in some countries, directly at the school level through 'twinning' and other arrangements. While ministries of education generally take the lead in sector program partnerships, the engagement of central agencies, such as ministries of finance and planning, will be essential for ensuring that aid contributions do not substitute for public sector allocations and that broad government systems are improved.

The nature of partnerships will vary from country to country. For example, in fragile states with weak governance and low capacity, Australia will balance our support between building government capacity and supporting other agencies such as non-government and faith-based organisations that are providing education services directly to the people. In countries where Australia is a leading donor, we have a special responsibility to facilitate the creation of sector program partnerships among donors to enhance harmonisation.

An essential element of improving the effectiveness of aid outcomes will be strategic partnerships with other bilateral and multilateral agencies and participation in international initiatives. Contributions to the Education for All Fast Track Initiative will help to ensure that resources are available to partner countries that meet clear governance and service delivery standards.



ABOVE: Australian volunteers are valuable contributors to development in the Asia–Pacific region. Here, Australian volunteer and teacher Mark Betheras, from Bright in Victoria, talks to grade 1 students at the Thaajuddeen primary school in the Maldives. An Australian team of international volunteers was deployed to assist schools affected by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. PHOTO: AusAID



# Glossary

<b>basic education</b>	Educational activities that aim to meet essential learning needs. Basic education usually comprises primary and junior secondary schooling.
<b>capacity building</b>	The process of developing competencies and capabilities in individuals, groups, organisations, sectors or countries that will lead to sustained and self-generating improvements in performance.
<b>country strategies</b>	Country strategies articulate the outcomes the Australian Government aims to achieve in specific developing countries.
<b>curriculum</b>	The organised body of knowledge to be transmitted through schooling.
<b>donor harmonisation</b>	The coordination by donors of their processes, procedures and activities to reduce the burden of aid on developing countries.
<b>Education for All</b>	An international initiative that aims to meet all basic learning needs by 2015. Education for All has six goals including universal primary education and gender parity in schools. More information is available at < <a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/index.shtml">www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/index.shtml</a> >.
<b>Education for All Fast Track Initiative</b>	A compact launched in 2002 to accelerate progress towards Education for All that links increased donor support with recipient countries' performance. Its secretariat is managed by the World Bank.
<b>fragile states</b>	States that face particularly difficult development prospects because of weak governance, policies and institutions. Fragility can be exacerbated by political, economic and/or social instability, including conflict. There is no definitive list of fragile states – many are fragile in only some aspects and may move in and out of fragility.
<b>fragmentation</b>	A lack of coordination between donors that results in disjointed activities using different procedures and that increases the burden on developing country administrations.
<b>gender parity index</b>	The ratio of female to male students used as a measure of progress towards gender equity.

<b>language of instruction</b>	The language or languages used in the classroom. Some countries use a single official language. Others provide transitional bilingual education instruction so that children use their first language in the early years of schooling and are then taught in the national language.
<b>literacy rate</b>	The estimated number of literate adults expressed as a percentage of the total adult population (15 years of age and above).
<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>	Eight measurable goals and targets for combating global poverty and hunger, as well as the world's most critical education, health, environmental and gender challenges. In 2000, the world's countries and development institutions committed to the target date of 2015. More information is available at < <a href="http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals">www.un.org/millenniumgoals</a> >.
<b>net enrolment rate</b>	Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group. The net enrolment rate is generally lower than the gross enrolment rate, which is a simple headcount of the total number of students at a particular level, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.
<b>non-government organisation</b>	Typically a non-profit organisation that carries out activities of social and economic development and that relies on donations for its operation. Non-government organisations are officially registered legal entities but can be local, national or international in scope.
<b>numeracy</b>	The ability to interpret numerical information and perform basic mathematical functions.
<b>policy coherence</b>	A term used to describe how complementary policies such as policies on trade, investment, aid and migration, work together in support of development.
<b>proxy indicator</b>	An indirect measure used when direct measures are unreliable or unavailable. For example, the quality of education is difficult to measure directly, and completion rates are often used as a proxy indicator since there is a strong statistical correlation between the two.
<b>universal primary education</b>	The international target that all children should complete a full course of primary schooling of good quality. Universal primary education will be achieved when both enrolment and completion rates approach 100 per cent.

# Notes

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- 7 *Ibid.*, Annex Table 12.
- 8 *Ibid.*, Table 2.9, p. 29.
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