

New Challenges for Educational Development and Cooperation in Asia in the 21st Century: Building Indigenous Capacity for Education Reforms

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I. Introduction

Developing countries in Asia have gone through rapid changes in recent years politically, economically, and socio-culturally. Demographic changes, for example, profoundly affect education. The growing proportion of the school-age population in some countries increases the need for investment in basic education. In other countries, aging populations and increasing life expectancy suggest a greater need for worker retraining, skill upgrading, and lifelong or continuing education. Economic changes require more attention to investment in post-basic and higher education as well as in skills development, in order to support the transformation to a high-technology, service-oriented economy. The movement to a market-oriented economy in many developing countries of the region requires fundamental changes in the way economic growth is managed and promoted. Above all, globalization presents a major challenge to which education systems must ensure that global standards are met and competitiveness in marketing goods and services needs to be increased.

Under these ever-changing circumstances, how can we ensure that today's children receive an education relevant to their future needs? What are the new issues and main education challenges confronting the region? How we can possibly meet these challenges? Entering into the 21st century, we are facing with all these important and fundamental questions. To respond to these questions, we must not only address the enduring issues of equity, quality, efficiency, and finance in education, but also take the opportunity to pursue a new vision in educational development and cooperation in the 21st century. Most countries in Asia are addressing new issues and trying to meet new challenges, by restructuring or reforming their education systems. However, their restructuring or reform efforts are introduced not only without an appropriate conceptual/analytical framework to encompass such reform process but also without an adequately organized and planned capacity building for education reforms, especially in terms of governance,

planning and management of the education systems.

Accordingly, the objectives of this essay are to: (i) provide a brief overview of educational development in Asia; (ii) highlight emergent issues and new challenges faced by the education systems in Asia under an era of globalization; (iii) discuss new assistance modalities and conceptual/ analytical framework to support education reforms; and (iv) set a long term vision to build indigenous capacity in engineering education reforms and suggest approaches in a phased manner. In addition, the potentials of Japanese universities and research/training institutions in building such indigenous capacity in developing countries in Asia will be discussed as an essential element of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

II. Emergent Issues and New Challenges for the 21st Century¹

Developing countries in Asia have achieved significant expansion and improvement of education. However, most Asian countries are confronting emergent issues and new challenges, which require a radical restructuring or reform of the education systems. The underlying overall trend which will affect the whole Asian region is a phenomena of globalization.

A. Overview of Education Development in Asia

Asia encompasses a great diversity of countries including small countries such as Singapore or Bhutan, and gigantic countries such as India or the People' Republic of China (PRC). Although there is a diversity of the status of educational development across each country, some common characteristics in the region can be discerned.² Despite of their different political, economic, cultural, religious, or ethnic background, almost all countries have sharply expanded education provisions (Ordonez and Maclean, 2000). One of factors to realize this expansion is considered to be the governments' strong intervention to education. Every Asian country has regarded education as a driving force of economic development and national integration. By emphasizing human capital investment, most countries allocate a significant share of their national budget to the education sector. The educational policy, prioritizing primary education, has led to high economic performance with equity. Another factor of successful educational development is peoples' enthusiasm and demand for education. High demand for educational services brings high enrollment ratios at all educational levels, that is something not observed in other regions. Communities, households, and individuals are willing to pay for the

services, which have been compensating to governments' education budget. Especially when provision of educational services by the government is insufficient, other modes of education delivery such as distance education, community financing, and study abroad have played a crucial role. The governments' strong intervention to the education sector and the active private sector's participation may be the key to develop human resources superior in quality and realize recent high economic performance in Asia.

B. Globalization: Some Implications

In spite of the relative success of educational development in Asia, the phenomena of globalization poses an unprecedented challenge. Globalization has no single definition, but the phenomenon of globalization is the result of the interlocking of the economic and financial sectors at the global level. Although the likely consequences of globalization are difficult to judge, the essential consequences of the phenomenon of globalization include: (i) the emergence of knowledge societies as a result of the proliferation of information and communication sources; (ii) the transformation of the nature of work, mainly owing to the need for greater flexibility and mobility; (iii) the more intensive use of modern technologies, especially the growing importance of information and communication technology (ICT); and (iv) the increase in social exclusion because much of the world's population are unemployed, badly employed, or earn low wages (Lewin, 1998; Hallak, 2000; Heyneman, 2001).

The effects of globalization on education are many and far-reaching. Educational policy makers and planners need to have conceptual tools to discern what the phenomenon is and what its implications are. Carnoy (1999) contends that globalization has changed the nature and requisites of jobs - having a major impact on labor markets. Education systems must be restructured since more people with different knowledge and competencies are required. ICT is used to increase the scope and effectiveness of education, and more sophisticated instruments are used to measure educational quality. Globalization also changes culture, creating struggles for the control of schools as instruments of socialization.

While new opportunities have arisen as a result of deepening globalization, there are clearly winners and losers. Historically, the globalization process has increased opportunities for countries with good levels of education. The successful countries began in a strong position in terms of human resources, managed to enter the world economy, and increased their earnings and resources, i.e., they have improved their international competitiveness. However, globalization has made growth more difficult for countries with

weak levels of education (Green, 1997). Hence, virtuous and vicious cycles of educational development have emerged, with a good spread of education leading to high growth and generating resources for further development of education, and conversely, countries with poor human resources having low or negative growth and reduced potential for building up their education systems (McGinn, 1996; Stewart, 1996). The adverse effects of globalization has made it increasingly difficult for a growing number of countries to finance their educational development in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The losers began in a position marked by low school enrolment and poor quality education. They were cut off from the globalization process, and became increasingly marginalized and vulnerable.³

C. Emergent Issues and New Challenges

Under the era of globalization, emergent issues and new challenges which would be dominant in developing countries in the region can be summarized, but not limited, into the following seven themes (Hirosato, 1998a): (i) changing external conditions; (ii) reexamining the role of the state/government; (iii) introducing market mechanisms and public-private partnerships; (iv) decentralization and school-based management; (v) ICT and education in the knowledge-based economy; (vi) promoting educational development across the border; and (vii) targeting quality education for all (EFA) including consideration for vulnerable groups. In order to adequately and timely address these emergent issues and meet new challenges, a new set of assistance modalities, conceptual and analytical framework, and organized and planned capacity for education reforms should be developed.

1. Changing External Conditions

Recent educational development in Asia has been supported by the so called economic “miracle” in the region. There seems to have been a strong correlation between educational and economic development. High performing Asian economies, however, appears to have structural problems in their economies. These structural problems induced economic crisis through massive current account deficit and uncertainty in the financial system since mid 1997. As a result of the crisis, most Asian countries, and especially the hardest-hit countries such as Indonesia and Thailand, experienced dramatic drops in GDP growth. The social impacts of the crisis are transmitted by increased under- and unemployment, reduced income, and increased prices. The crisis has

also shown the region's vulnerabilities as well as the inadequacy of its domestic social protection policies. The social consequences of the crisis are likely to be felt long after these economies would return to solid growth. In particular, absolute poverty has increased in the crisis-affected countries, and the poor and their children have suffered the most (ADB, 2000a). It should be emphasized that structural problems in their politics and economies appeared long before sufficient human resource foundations had been established in those countries, especially Indonesia and Thailand.⁴ Economic crisis not only has made it difficult to finance increased education expenditures, but also caused labor market distortions and increased educated unemployment. Therefore, recent economic changes would have an immense impact on educational development in Asia (Ablett and Slengesol, 2000). In such context, education system needs to be flexible and sensitive to economic changes in future, which by and large cannot be anticipated or predicted.⁵

2. Reexamining the Role of the State/Government

Governments in this region made significant contribution to realize high economic performance and human resource development (World Bank, 1993; World Bank, 1997). It is believed that one of the key factors was the expansion of primary education. The necessity for governments' intervention in primary education has not been questioned, but its extent and contents have been discussed, referring, for example, to the effective use of public resources, reexamining the burden sharing between the public and the private sector including communities, introducing the market mechanism, and improving transparency in policy-decision makings.

The role of the state/government both at the central and local levels, especially in terms of responsibility for the governance, planning, and management of education, is changing (and sometimes, even disappearing) with unexpected rapidity and is being dynamically redefined in many developing countries. In particular, in the context of decentralization (including privatization), adjustments are being made in assignment of responsibilities and functions in areas such as planning, finance, curriculum, textbooks and instructional materials, teachers, facilities, supervision, and evaluation (Bray, 1996; Gaynor, 1998; Patrinos and Ariasingham, 1997; Riddell, 1997b). However, private sector provisions of education would not relieve governments of a significant, even essential, role in accreditation (quality control) and monitoring (consumer protection). Thus, governments can do much more to facilitate and monitor the provision of private education.

3. Introducing Market Mechanism and Public-Private Partnerships

Asian countries, especially East Asian countries, have put their budgetary priorities on national development and compulsory education. Such prioritization has contributed to a high enrolment ratio in primary education. Moreover, secondary and higher education is dramatically expanding in some countries. Introduction of the market mechanism into the education system and the complementary role of private sector in absorbing demand for post-primary education have made it possible to realize such budget allocation and development of the education system as a whole (Tooley, 1999). Despite heavy government subsidies to private education in some countries such as India and Bangladesh, the private sector per se plays a major role to absorb excess demand for higher education. In Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, about one third of secondary school enrollment is in private schools, and in the Philippines over 80 percent of postsecondary education is provided by private sector institutions. Their cost-recovery ratio is also high. Private sector provision of on-the-job skills training for workers is common in many countries. Private schools were previously illegal in Cambodia, Laos, PRC, and Vietnam; however, governments partially approved charging student fees in public institutions and establishing private or non-public schools. Introduction of the market mechanism is strongly encouraged in technical and vocational education, because of its high unit cost and inability of public institutions to adjust with rapid technological changes and labor market requirements.

Thus, public-private partnerships are becoming more frequent, but the potentials for substantially increasing such partnerships have not been realized (Hirosato, 2000b). The scope for private sector provision of educational services extends far beyond spaces in classrooms. In most developed countries, education systems are supported by a vast private sector network of supplementary services such as textbook publishing, assessment, and marketing of supplementary teaching and learning materials/equipment (Heyneman, 2001). Such provision is quite limited in many countries of the region where governments tend to assume responsibility, often with greater cost and inferior quality, for almost all educational services. No country in the region has yet attempted what several developed countries, for example, the United States and the United Kingdom, are doing with greater frequency - contracting management of publicly owned schools to private sector agencies.

4. Decentralization and School Based Management

Many developing countries in the region are increasingly aware that education can be more effective and perhaps less costly by decentralizing education management, that is, making lower levels of government and communities responsible for education planning, management, and financing. Decentralized administration and management of the education system is thought to be more flexible and responsible to local needs and hence, the accountability of local governments would be improved. Decentralization of education administration and management is strongly recommended by international aid agencies. Indonesia, for example, is the most notable case where basic education management is being decentralized to the district level by utilizing grants from bilateral agencies (Hiroساتo ed., 1998b) and an ADB loan (ADB, 2001c). Decentralized administration requires participation of local governments, schools, and communities in educational policy making process, which is expected to improve administration in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness at the school level. However, delegating budgeting and decision-making authority to local education offices or schools has usually not been accompanied by attention to developing adequate capacity in the many functions and skills essential for effective education management (Scheerens, 2000). Relatively little attention has been given to redefining the role of the central education ministry to focus on setting standards, formulating policy and monitoring mechanisms, and providing technical support to local education agencies/offices. Decentralization of education administration and management is a clear trend, but still an act in progress with much to be learned about how one can best support it (Abu-Duhou, 1999; McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

5. Information and Communication Technology and Education in the Knowledge-Based Economy

The ICT revolution has forever changed the way developing countries in Asia must plan and manage their economies. Increasing productivity, ensuring competitiveness, and maximizing utilization of and benefit from the vastly increased access to knowledge requires investment in ICT and in education and training related to ICT. The rising demand for education and training in ICT demonstrates recognition of its importance on the part of students and workers. Much, if not most, of the demand for education and training is being met by private sector providers in many countries. ICT has in particular potentials for enriching and improving the quality and relevance of education provided to the poor, which in turn should contribute to narrowing the 'digital divide' between developed and developing countries, among developing countries, and within a developing country. Application on ICT can provide resources for teachers in poor schools and flexible

learning schedule for out-of-youth. But in most countries of the region, basic education and nonformal education continue to make minimal use of ICT either to improve quality or to increase access, mainly due to the lack of ICT infrastructure including the regulated telecommunication sector monopolized by the state. Once ICT infrastructure becomes more affordable and accessible, the challenge is to support education sector strategies and investments that (i) strengthen the application of ICT in education and training; (ii) train teachers on the use of ICT in their classrooms; (iii) ensure that education and training support the requirements of developing ICT in each country, and (iv) are equitable, cost-effective, and sustainable (Hirosato and Tiene, 2001).

6. Promoting Educational Development Across the Border

On one hand, the process of globalization is deepening, and on the other hand, opportunities for regional or subregional cooperation emerge, which offers larger markets, economies of scale, and division of labor, to accelerate growth. Such cooperation is strategically useful for the small and often failing countries with limited options in the process of globalization. Cooperation may work best at the subregional level as in the Greater Mekong subregion (GMS) (ADB, 2000b), the “growth triangles or quadrangles,”⁶ and the Central Asian republics. New approaches in educational development seem to appear from cross-border cooperation. In the GMS, efforts are being made to coordinate and standardize skills competencies in each of participating countries. In the “East ASEAN Growth Area (EAGA),” demand and supply of human resources can be met across the borders among participating countries at the similar level of economic development so that a broader market and production base can be created. Some countries such as Myanmar and the Philippines have not yet solved the problem of national integration. The subregional cooperation can also provide the opportunities to Myanmar (under the GMS) and the Philippines (under the EAGA) to develop their potentials for economic and human resource development, without hampering national integration efforts.

7. Targeting “Quality Education for All”

Over the last two decades, the Asian region has been relatively successful in achieving education for all (EFA) objectives; EFA refers to the global effort to achieve universal quality basic education. The World Declaration of EFA adopted in 1990 targeted quantitative expansion of basic education in Asia. The growth of enrollment of primary school children has outpaced that of other regions of the world.⁷ However, there are still

substantial numbers of children in the region who lack access to school or who drop out before completing school. These children tend to be in remote rural areas or from poor urban families. The majority of them are girls and women, and ethnic minorities. About 37 million children were still not participating in formal basic education in the region, and of 885 million illiterate people worldwide, 625 million of them were in the region. In the region, the gender gap in adult literacy rate was about 14 percent in 1995, only slightly better than the 17 percent in 1985. In most countries in South Asia, adult literary rates are still below 50 percent and the gender gap is much wider than the regional average. In addition, more than 21 million children who will reach age 15 by 2005 will most likely drop out before grade 5. Millions of children who have completed the basic education cycle have not acquired essential knowledge and skills because of the poor quality of education (Ordonez and Vine, 2000).

Thus, access to quality basic education is still insufficient in many Asian countries. Recent efforts to enhance the provision of basic education with quality have changed the policy goal from EFA to "Quality Education for All" (Nielsen and Cummings, 1997; World Bank, 1999; World Bank, 2000). It was in this context when the Dakar Framework for Action was adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000. The World Education Forum set a goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and ensuring that all children will have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015 (World Education Forum, 2000a; 2000b). A challenge will be to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015, by reaching out to marginalized groups such as the poor, girls and women, and ethnic minorities (Hiroساتo, 2000a). Tremendous disparities can be found between urban, affluent areas and rural, remote provinces and districts with ethnic minority groups. Further challenge is to achieve quality secondary (lower) education for all, which is already a de facto policy agenda in some developing countries in Asia and will be the main policy priority in most developing countries beyond 2015.

III. Educational Cooperation in the 21st Century: New Modalities and Framework

How has the international community prepared for entering into the 21st century in its educational cooperation? In view of its important role in educational development and cooperation in Asia, it is worth referring to the policy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on education, and discussing new assistance modalities to support restructuring or reform of education systems in developing countries. Then, the political economy of

education reforms is called for as a more adequate conceptual/analytical framework to encompass a dynamic and complex reform process.

A. ADB's Policy on Education

ADB commits to helping to achieve the seven international development goals (IDGs) agreed by the international community; two are directly related to education which were confirmed at the World Education Forum:⁸ (i) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005; and (ii) attaining 100 percent primary school enrolment by 2015. Achieving the IDGs is a fundamental element of the draft ADB's Policy on Education (ADB, 2001a). ADB therefore wishes to ensure that: *all children and adults will have equitable access to education of sufficient quality to empower them to break the poverty cycle, to improve their quality of life, and to participate effectively in national development* (ADB, 2001a).

To achieve the stated goal, ADB support for education must be carefully targeted for maximum impact on the complex set of interrelated issues affecting the development of effective education systems. Experience globally and regionally demonstrates that most of the basic issues of education development cannot be resolved in isolation from each other and cannot therefore be resolved in the absence of a coordinated framework that establishes clear goals and priorities for reform. The focus of education investment and support should be on education sector development and reform. Therefore, resources should be invested in a set of activities linked to a comprehensive policy reform framework. For example, funding classrooms and desks for girls should continue, but such investment will be far effective if resources are also provided to develop policy incentives for increasing girls enrolment, addressing policy constraints to training and recruiting female teachers, and ensuring equitable allocation of budgetary resources for schools enrolling large proportions of poor girls. Building new schools will increase the number of places available but will not necessarily increase enrolment and retention of the poor unless policies designed to decrease the cost of schooling to the poor and increase the equity of resource allocation to poor schools are put in place. It is argued in the draft Policy on Education that ADB should support education sector programs using within the broader context of education sector policy framework as opposed to "free-standing" projects.

B. New Assistance Modalities and Framework: In Support of Education Reforms

1. From Project/Program to Sector-Wide Approaches

As set forth by the draft ADB's Policy on Education, support to education in developing countries should therefore be provided within the context of broader education sector reform; that is, it should comprise a set of activities planned and delivered within an integrated policy framework that articulates a vision and sets the goals. Approaches to education should evolve to support within a policy framework over a sustained period with emphasis on policies and interventions that most effectively reduce the poverty in the region.

In terms of modalities for assistance, we have seen, in recent years, an argument for linking project/program lending more carefully to frameworks for sector reform. There are recent changes in international support to education, particularly with respect to what has become known as sector-wide approaches to education. Different terms are used variously by international aid agencies and national governments. They are understood as an alternative or a mode supplementary to the project assistance which was dominant during the 1970s and 1980s. The terms reflect an understanding that the project assistance mode has failed to ensure holistic, integrated development of education systems and that the new assistance mode can better remove bottlenecks through coordinated efforts horizontally and vertically in terms of support for all the individual components which are needed to provide quality education at any specific level (Buchert, 2000).

Some examples of the new assistance modalities include: (i) World Bank - sector investment program including adaptable program lending (Harrold and Associates, 1995); (ii) USAID (U.S.A.) - education reform support (Crouch and DeStefano, 1997; Crouch and Healey, 1997); (iii) DFID (U.K.) - sector-wide approaches (Brown et. al., 2001; Ratcliffe Macrae Associates, 1999); and (iv) SIDA (Sweden) - sector program support (Hyden, 1997). The origin of this new assistance mode can be associated with initiation of World Bank education sector investment programs and their underlying principles as presented by Harrold and Associates (1995), elaborated by Jones (1997), and reviewed by the World Bank (2001). These principles are the followings: (i) each program has to be sector-wide in scope; (ii) it has to have a coherent sector policy framework; (iii) local stakeholders have to be in the driver's seat; (iv) all donors must sign up to the program; (v) common implementation arrangements must be developed; and (vi) minimal long-term financial and technical assistance must be ensured. ADB also finances or is preparing a growing number of sector development programs by taking a policy-based approach, which include

Cambodia (ADB, 2001b), Indonesia (ADB, 1998b), Kyrgyz (ADB, 1997), Mongolia (ADB, 1996), and Thailand (ADB, 1998a).

There seems to be a widespread belief that the new modalities represent the only solution for overcoming the deficiencies of the previous project assistance mode. However, as King and Buchert (1999) alert, no country where all the desired underlying principles have been successfully implemented in a sector-wide approach can yet be identified. A number of other critical issues related to the new assistance modalities also remain unresolved, for example, the risk that the approach represents another standardization or blueprint which fails to take specific national contexts, conditions, and timing into consideration.⁹ It also seems that not all countries (and donor agencies) are ready to take on the complexities of sector-wide planning and policy analysis. In those cases, imposition of sector-wide approaches may increase dependence on external assistance.

2. The Political Economy of Education Reforms

Growing adoption of sector-wide approaches certainly requires a political economy framework, which is a more suitable conceptual and analytical framework in analyzing the dynamics of education sector restructuring or reform process in developing countries. The political economy of education reforms encompasses sector-wide interventions from the central/provincial government to the school/class room levels.¹⁰ For example, a current guideline of ADB on education sector/project analysis is essentially an education production function type of framework, looking at input-output relationship, and is not readily applicable to sector development programs (ADB, 1994). Especially in the context of a clear trend of decentralized education administration and management, the scope of education interventions now includes all the stakeholders from central and provincial governments to the broadly defined private sector including NGOs, private firms, community organizations, school boards, and parents (Buchert, 1998). The World Bank provides some knowledge and experiences on global education reforms (Corrales, 1999; Pandey, 2000), and USAID contributes to develop such conceptual and analytical framework based on its basic education programs in Sub-Saharan Africa (Crouch and Healey, 1997; Crouch and DeStefano, 1997; Moulton, 2001). However, it is not clear if the experiences on education reforms in other regions have direct relevance in analyzing education reform process in Asia and can suggest appropriate policy framework and strategies. Ideally, such framework and strategies for education reforms should be developed based on the analysis of Asian experiences. It should also be emphasized that most developing countries in Asia are striving to restructure or reform their education

systems without developing the appropriate conceptual and analytical framework to encompass such reform process, and without developing adequate capacity at each level of educational administration under the decentralized education management structure.

IV. A Vision for the 21st Century: Toward Indigenous Capacity Building

Asia is the world's most populous region where 900 million still live on less than \$1 a day, comprising 75 percent of the global total. The process of education reforms in addressing the emergent issues and meeting new challenges have had mixed results in reaching the ultimate client - the poor people in Asia. In the long term, a vision for education in the 21st Century is simply stated: *poverty in Asia must be reduced or eliminated through genuine efforts to build indigenous capacity in all areas of the education system.*

A. Capacity Building for Whom? - A Dilemma

To realize such vision, national education planning and management, sector analysis, project formation, appraisal, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation must be eventually undertaken by recipient countries. In reality, however, these activities have all been undertaken by expatriate "fly-in, fly-out" consultants with nominal representation or inclusion of local researchers (Kann, 1999; Samoff, 1996; Samoff et al. 1996; Samoff, 1999; Sifuna, 2000). Prevalent deficiencies, for example, in education planning and sector analysis, have been raised since independence days, despite that a variety of courses, training, short- and longer-term scholarships and fellowships have been provided in the form of technical assistance. Some forty years after the independence, the same problems are prevail although to some extent, developed capacity has not always deployed and utilized appropriately (Namuddu, 1998). There are no serious, frank, and systematic study or discussion on the issue which explains past failures or inefficiencies of capacity building efforts. In Asia, the situation is almost the same as in Africa even though there are some remarkable national and regional initiatives in building indigenous capacity to plan and manage education reforms.

There are two sides of the story. Recipient countries argue there has been the serious neglect as regards using universities and other institutions that could do the task (Habte, 1999). In general, the low quality of research methods and products put out by scholars or experts in recipient countries to be given as the main reason why donor agencies and even governments in recipient countries are forced to commission external

experts to do research rather than use local scholars and experts (Namuddu, 1998). Donor agencies also claim that since they need to meet the requirements and standard of their operations to be accountable to the policy or decision-makers of Europe, Japan, and North America rather than to those of the recipient countries; the quality of sector and project work undertaken mostly by experts in recipient countries has not reached the acceptable level. In fact, a lot of frustration are being felt by staff of donor agencies during their day-to-day operations. In the case of commercial loans, those who wish to borrow the money from the commercial banks should develop own business proposals and submit them to the banks or the money lenders. Then, their business proposals will be appraised by the banks, and approval or disapproval of the proposals are at the discretion of the banks. However, in the area of development cooperation, especially of development banking, bank staff or expatriate consultants hired by the banks always need to extend direct support in writing up the necessary documents for appraisal and approval. In some cases, it is the recipient countries themselves which prefer to send their nationals to universities or training institutes located in those countries such as U.K. and France, and to accept expatriate advisors or consultants from these countries.

This situation needs to be altered, should the ultimate goal of donor support is to strengthen indigenous, national capacity for diagnosing, designing, managing, and implementing education reforms in a continuous and sustainable manner. Therefore, an alternative way of indigenous capacity building should be sought. In more practical terms, what is needed is a long-term process through which to build a local, indigenous capacity to diagnose policy problems, develop competent proposals for funding from internal or external sources, experiment with a variety of options, plan for the scaling-up of successful interventions, and conduct appropriate monitoring and evaluation of education reform programs.

B. Building Indigenous Capacity through Regional Initiatives

There are some notable global initiatives to build indigenous capacity for education reforms partly covering the Asian region, which include: International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP)¹¹; and World Bank Institute (WBI).¹² In Asia, there are some prominent national and regional institutes and network on educational research, planning, and management. Most importantly, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok (UNESCO Regional Bureau, Bangkok), which was established in 1961 and is the largest field office of UNESCO, is thus mandated to be the principal regional focal point for UNESCO activities. The Planning and Sector Analysis

Unit has been recently created to respond to the increasingly important needs of member states in the field of education management, policy and information. The Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP), which was created in 1995 with the support by IIEP, is another important mechanism to strengthen national capacity in training and research in educational planning and management.¹³ These existing national, regional and global initiatives have conducted a number of policy researches and sector studies, and provided training. However, these initiatives are largely fragmented and often on an ad hoc basis and hence, may not be able to achieve a long term goal of developing indigenous capacity for education reforms. An alternative approach should be explored to achieve the vision for the 21st century by strengthening the partnership framework among recipient countries, international aid agencies, universities or research/training institutions, and NGOs/civil society.

As the alternative approach, it is high time to create a regional institute for developing indigenous capacity for education reforms by incorporating new target groups and functions. New target groups comprise: education policy makers/senior officials as a priority target group; education administrators and planners at the local level; and education technicians/statisticians. In the region, there are no training programs effectively targeting high level policy makers/senior officials who can engineer the education reform process. At the moment, primary targets of IIEP and others are middle-level administrators and planners (deputy director or unit head levels of education ministries). High-level policy makers and senior officials should be given the opportunities to learn reform experiences and lessons through (sub)regional training programs. Moreover, IIEP and others are not targeting education administrators and planners at the local level, and education technicians/ statisticians in countries. First of all, the numbers are too high; every country needs dozens of people who require hands-on and practical training opportunities geared towards their everyday work. Second, these training activities are too expensive for an institution like IIEP and others that are not located in Asia. In the context of particular education reforms, a proposed regional hub or institute should be able to target the new groups through (sub)regional programs and tailor-made or adjusted programs at each country level. As new functions, the regional hub or institute should: (i) be linked to organizations like ADB, World Bank, UNESCO Regional Bureau, Bangkok, which are involved in operational education development and reform programs; (ii) keep itself abreast with latest developments and reforms taking place in countries; (iii) have in-house capacity to undertake training needs assessment in preparing tailor-made programs for specific target groups; (iv) develop a strong capacity in designing and implementing policy researches and sector studies based on the reform experiences at the

country level; and (v) attach a clearing house function for training in education planning and management that developing countries and donor agencies can draw upon.

C. Regional Institute for Education Planning and Management as a Regional Hub

Four phases are envisaged as to how and when developing countries, in collaboration with other partners, can develop their national, indigenous capacity to design and implement education reforms through creating the regional institute for education planning and management.

1. Phase 1: Conceptualization and Institutional Agreement (1-2 years)

As the first step, it is necessary to well conceptualize the regional program for indigenous capacity building for education reforms, and reach common understanding on the concept and approaches among interested parties (selected developing countries, donor agencies, and universities/research and training institutions) in one or two years. This understanding should include funding mechanism and the role of each interested party. There should be a clear institutional agreement by which the regional program will be developed, piloted, and monitored and evaluated. This phase should also serve as a planning stage to assess the feasibility of creating the regional institute for education planning and management including the review of the experience and lessons from the similar undertakings in other regions and the consensus building among representatives from the interested parties regarding the necessity to develop the regional institute.

During this start-up and planning phase, there will be talks, discussions, negotiations among potential partners, and visits among partner countries and agencies. This process should be led by formulation of an expert group (including representatives of a host country's government) who will draft such agreement for creating the regional institute including the definition of the regional program, the role of partner countries and agencies, funding mechanism and modalities, priority policy research agenda, and structures of training programs. Such expert group, which would be tentatively based at UNESCO Regional Bureau, Bangkok, will liaise with IIEP and other national training institutes in the region as the main partners in planning the regional program, and collaborate with bilateral agencies and multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and ADB. It should be emphasized that if the start up/planning phase will be limited to a single bilateral organization, ADB, or UNESCO alone, it will most likely fail.

All the partner countries and agencies should be involved in supporting this initiative both through financial and technical assistance, and networking resources.

2. Phase 2: Program Development (3-5 years)

The second phase is considered to be the regional program development phase in which the program is set up, piloted, evaluated, improved, and expanded. Also during this phase, the core staff will be deployed, and different funding mechanisms and sources including own revenue generation will be explored. Partner agencies will give priority to funding of policy researches or pilot projects that involve collaboration among developing countries.

For example, it is worth developing an Asian version of the “Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)”¹⁴ as one of the regional programs or modalities to be covered by the regional institute. SACMEQ’s main mission is to undertake integrated research and training activities that will: (i) expand opportunities for educational planners to gain the technical skills required to monitor, evaluate, and compare the general conditions of schooling and the quality of basic education; and (ii) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan the quality of education (Ross, 1998; Pfukani, 1999). The SACMEQ has set world-class standards with respect to the excellence of its training programs, the high scientific quality of its policy research products, and the ownership of its future directions by participating Ministries of Education. Regional collaboration like the SACMEQ permits economies of scale that would not be achieved when countries undertake their own projects. The Asian version of SACMEQ can be developed from a wide range of policy, planning, and management issues related to education sector reforms that would encompass decentralization, private education, school-based management, new pedagogy (student-centered, problem solving approaches), the use of ICT in education, and so on.

3. Phase 3: Program Expansion and Consolidation (5-10 years)

The third phase is to physically establish the regional institute for education planning and management as a regional hub (tentatively named “Asian Institute for Education Planning and Management”), in order to train education policy makers, planners, managers, and technicians/ statisticians in developing countries for educational development and reforms. Such institute can be physically set up either in Bangkok, Thailand, as attached to existing regional institutions like UNESCO Regional Bureau,

Bangkok, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)-Secretariat or as stand alone, or another country in Asia such as the Philippines, Singapore, or Viet Nam that is strategically located to undertake (sub)regional activities. ADB, IIEP, UN agencies, World Bank bilateral agencies, foundations, governments (including a host country's government), other national training institutions, and NGOs/civil society are the potential partners in providing technical and financial supports.

During the third phase, the regional program will be further expanded by introducing distance education with new outreach programs and self-learning materials. Various training modules will be developed based on outcomes of policy researches and sector studies conducted during the phase two possibly using the policy economy framework and including the Asian version of SACMEQ. These modules will be used targeting different groups and modified as necessary to suit training needs of particular target groups, and full-fledged training programs will be implemented from the year 7 to the year 10 and beyond.

4. Phase 4: Regional Organization to Mediate Assistance (beyond 10 years)

The fourth phase further advances the concept of creating the regional institute for education planning and management. It eventually calls for the creation of a regional funding organization to be represented by developing countries in the region for educational development and reform, in order to utilize national, indigenous capacity to be built in a true sense. This organization may be created for the sole purpose of administering and allocating the regional development funds provided by donor agencies or developing countries themselves. In many respects, the regional fund organization is different from the existing development banks such as ADB and the World Bank. It is expected that developing countries apply to the regional development funds rather than to donor agencies.¹⁵ The regional fund organization has the authority and the own staff to assess the contributions of the requested assistance to educational development and reforms in the region. Special attention might be given to programs/projects that involve two or more countries (McGinn, 2000). The regional organization could be staffed ideally with those who would have completed training programs offered at the proposed Asian Institute for Education Planning and Management, and/or with personnel of the developing countries now working in their respective governments and in donor agencies who has equipped with project formulation, appraisal, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation capacity. It would be accountable to those countries to contributing to the

regional development funds. Its authorities, granted by participating countries, would include: (i) approval, or rejection, of all requests for assistance; (ii) monitoring of fund use in recipient countries and of project implementation; and (iii) evaluation of outcomes of completed programs/projects.¹⁶

. Potentials of Japanese Universities and Research/Training Institute

Japanese universities and research/training institutes could play as big a role in Japan's ODA, especially as did universities in Europe, U.S.A., and Oceania (Cummings, 1998). Some structural constraints in the Japan's ODA system have been well discussed and analyzed (Hiroساتo, 1998c; Yokozeki and Sawamura, 1999). Nevertheless, Japan's huge, untapped potentials to make better use of its universities, and research/training institutions should be fully explored in meeting the new challenges outlined earlier as well as fulfilling the stated vision in the 21st century - in building indigenous capacity of developing countries for education reforms. Cummings (1998) contends that while the Ministry of Education and Science has played a key role in establishing graduate level academic programs in international development, it has been much less effective in mobilizing university staff and resources for ODA. Although the proposed regional institute should be mainly developed through (sub)regional initiatives by developing countries and the international community, it would be beneficial to mobilize largely untapped resources from Japanese universities and research/training institutes as one of potential partners.

A. Forming Partnerships with the Existing Institutions and Network

Japanese universities and research/training institutes should and can play a greater role in the process of indigenous capacity building for education development and reforms. As a very first step, it is suggested that they participate in the existing network of regional institutions such as the ANTRIEP. For example, the Center for the Study of International Cooperation, Hiroshima University, and/or the National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan, can provide an international forum for educational policy-makers, planners, and managers. In addition, they should be part of the expert group to work on the conceptualization and institutional agreement on the proposed Asian Institute for Educational Planning and Management.

B. Challenging "Conventional Wisdom"

Japanese researchers at the universities and research/training institutes can contribute to generate new knowledge to better understand the issues in educational development and the complex process of education reforms in developing countries. Based on his extensive experience with the World Bank and various policy researches, Heyneman (1999) provides an insight regarding the relationship between policy and operations: “Some believe that good research leads to well-informed policy and that well-informed policy leads to well-designed operations. In my experience, the influence has been in the opposite direction. The demand for new areas of educational advice and assistance has revealed the inadequacies of analytic models currently in place,...Key to having good operations...is the ability to question analytic models when they outlive their utility.”

In spite of his personal reflections, most operational staff of donor agencies or government staff are not able to question the validity of such analytical models as education production function, cost-effectiveness, school effectiveness and improvement, which have been largely given as “conventional wisdom.” This is partly due to their day-to-day involvement in operations, and partly due to their limited ability to detect the inadequacies of such analytic models. It is only the research community which would be able to challenge such “conventional wisdom” or beliefs, for example, on the correlation between education inputs and outputs/outcomes under the education production function model (Cummings, 1998; Riddell, 1997). The new wisdom would also come out of the Japanese or Asian experiences in educational development and reforms, and the Japanese research community would be in a position to take lead in finding the relevance of Japanese and Asian experience to developing countries nowadays. This will certainly contribute to Phase 2 (program development) and Phase 3 (consolidation and expansion phases) of the proposed regional institute.

C. Participating to Education Sector Operations

The Government of Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation, has developed a number of ODA schemes which could involve Japanese universities and research/training institutes. Most importantly, JICA's development studies are now utilized to conduct education policy and operational researches and sector studies, and to pilot some innovative approaches in education development and reforms in developing countries (Hirosato, 1998c). This should give ample opportunities for Japanese universities and research/training institutes to

engage in 'informed dialogue' with policy-makers, planners, donor representatives, and other stakeholders, in the process of education reforms (McGinn and Reimers, 1997). In fact, the JICAs' development study scheme could be used to undertake the feasibility study for the regional institute during Phase 1 (conceptualization and institutional agreement) and Phase 2 (program development). In doing so, faculty staff of Japanese universities and research/training institutes are strongly encouraged to be part of the competitive bidding process of the development study so that their competitiveness in policy and operational researches, sector studies, or evaluation would be presumably enhanced. Likewise, they, in association with Japanese or foreign consulting firms and/or foreign universities, should be able to bid for the development study.

One of key challenges is to strengthen capacity of the government's officials and staff who can plan and manage education reforms which will be more often supported by sector-wide approaches. The proposed regional institute should contribute to strengthen such capacity. Increasingly, Japan's ODA program tends to take sector-wide approaches. However, to be involved in such complex operations dealing with the overall education reform and donor coordination process, highly experienced personnel, who would be only provided by universities and research/training institutes, should take part of sector-wider approaches. Such personnel in turn would effectively and meaningfully contribute to later phases of the proposed regional institute.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Entering into the 21st century, we have a unique opportunity to collaborate each other through larger partnerships in developing indigenous capacity of developing countries for education reforms. A major challenge for the 21st century is to learn how to meet the new overall trend of globalization including its implications to education in developing Asia, and how to achieve the stated vision in education. All the potentials toward this end should be fully explored and utilized.

Notes

- * The views contained herein are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the Asian Development Bank, or its Board of directors of the government they represent.
- ¹ A time frame of this essay more or less covers the first two decades or so of the 21st century. It is necessary to note that many of the current characteristics of the region

were not predictable a few years ago. There were also few, if any, predictions of the widespread economic crisis in Asia that occurred in 1997. Current attempts to discuss the future of educational development and cooperation in Asia may not be any more successful than those in the past. It is not the intention of this essay to speculate any long future going beyond 2020. The future is all the more unpredictable; however, if no investment in education is to be made, the future is even more unpredictable.

- ² Several groupings of Asian countries based on various criteria may be found in literature on education development in Asia including the Pacific islands (Hirosato ed., 1998b; Wolhuter, 1997). Conventional subregional groupings are attractive for some purposes but conceal within them very large variations in achievements. In reality, each subregion is characterized by considerable differences of size, economic development, history and culture. An alternative is to select a set of general indicators associated with development such as demographic factors, economic indicators, and levels of literacy. However, each grouping shows its own strengths and weakness. The Human Development Index (HDI) of the UNDP, based on measures of life expectancy, literacy, and real GDP per capita, provides a convenient measure of the development of human resources. A special typology of Asian countries, which was described in a recent ADB's commissioned study (Lewin, 1998), is more useful in order to facilitate intraregional analyses. In the Lewin's classification, seven groups of developing countries can be identified, which is defined by sets of indicators that include demographic, economic, and employment factors; level of literacy; and HDI.
- ³ As elaborated later in this essay, globalization is closely related to regionalization efforts so that less advantaged developing countries in Asia can maintain their economic competitiveness and achievements in educational development by promoting the flow of people and goods under the (sub)regional groupings. It also requires social protection efforts by providing targeted programs for the failing countries in the globalization process, especially, the poor, women, ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups in those countries.
- ⁴ Thailand's 1997-1999 experience (its crisis of export competitiveness, which was partly due to the crisis in its secondary and tertiary education policy and strategies) highlights the limitations of an education strategy that is over reliant on primary education (Malhotra, 2000).

- 5 The unpredictable terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 is the most recent event which would affect political and economic environments not only in Asia but also in the whole world. Although the implications for educational development are uncertain, the international community seems to increase its commitment and assistance to the poorest countries in the world in order to eradicate the poverty as the root cause of such terrorist attack.
- 6 Such as the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle and the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia- Malaysia-Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area.
- 7 The number of primary school children in the Asian region reached about 370 million in 1995, a 23 percent increase from some 300 million in 1980, while the overall number of primary school children in the world was 650 million in 1995, an increase of about 20 percent from 540 million in 1980 (Hirosato, 2000a).
- 8 Other five IDGs are to: reduce the incidence of extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015; reduce infant and child mortality by two thirds from 1990 to 2015; reduce maternal mortality ratios by three quarters between 1990 and 2015; provide access for all to reproductive health services by 2015; and attain implementation of a national sustainable development strategy by 2005 and reversal of the loss of environmental resources by 2015.
- 9 The issues not resolved by the new modalities can be grouped into another three categories: characteristics of givers; characteristics of receivers, and characteristics of partnership: First, in some donor countries, for example the United States and Japan, the political constituency for foreign aid is small and ineffective. It is not possible to ensure constant funding levels. In addition, budget allocation are for cycles of one or two years (Japan with one year). Strong political actors seek to design aid to contributed to national security objectives. These conditions limit the number of long-term commitments that can be sustained. Second, many aid receiving countries still lack the infrastructure and personnel required to handle sector-wide assistance. In many cases, their political structures and practices lack transparency and accountability mechanism. Third, partnerships do not necessarily identify and develop awareness of mutual dependence. (McGinn, 2000).
- 10 It should be noted that the emerging political economy framework of analyzing

education reform is different from the dependency or world system model in 1970s and 1980s (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990; Ginsburg, 1991). The framework is rather a multi-disciplinary framework for analyzing education reform in developing countries (Riddell, 1997) or education planning process (Adams, Kee, and Lin, 2001).

- ¹¹ IIEP, which was founded in 1963 by UNESCO, provides advanced training and research in educational planning, management, and administration as a means of promoting social and economic well-being in the developing regions of the world through capacity building. More concretely, IIEP intends to strengthen national capacity to plan and manage changing educational systems, and to improve the quality of the educational experience itself. More details are available at <http://www.unesco.org/iiep>.
- ¹² WBI, the former Economic Development Institute, was created to help share the World Bank's expertise and that of its member countries with policy and decision makers throughout the developing world. WBI delivers development-related seminars, workshops, and courses to selected participants from member countries. Topics address such themes including human development, labor market initiatives, and education reform. More details are available at <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi>.
- ¹³ The ANTRIEP comprises 17 member institutions from 10 countries as follows: Bangladesh - National Academy for Educational Management, Campaign for Popular Education, and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee; PRC - Shanghai Institute of Human Resource Development; India - National Council of Educational Research and Training, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, and Center for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research, and State Institute of Educational Management and Training; Indonesia - Office for Educational and Cultural Research and Development; Republic of Korea - Korean Educational Development Institute; Malaysia - National Institute of Educational Management; Nepal - National Center for Educational Innovation and Development, and Research Center for Educational Development; Pakistan - Academy of Educational Planning and Management; Sri Lanka - National Institute of Education; Philippines - Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology, South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO-INNOTECH); and France - IIEP, UNESCO. The network is open to all Asian training and research institutions involved in educational planning and management. One member organization is elected by consensus as the

focal point. It assumes responsibility for the publication of the Newsletter and the overall preparation of the annual meeting. Presently, the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) in India is acting as the focal point.

- 14 There has been a worldwide growth of interest in the application of large-scale scientific survey research techniques to the study of issues related to improving the quality of education. The IIEP has been working to address capacity building needs in this area in association with the 15 Ministries of Education that form the SACMEQ. The participating countries/institution are: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. IIEP is also one of full members of SACMEQ. For more details, see Saito (1999).
- 15 It should be noted that McGinn elaborates these ideas based on the notion of autonomous development funds developed by Hyden (1997).
- 16 The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) serves as an encouraging example of such an organization. ADEA began as a donor's organization, but moved towards being a forum in which recipients could make their views known. At present, the ADEA Steering Committee includes ten representatives of African ministers of education and training; these are elected by the Caucus of African Ministers, which includes all African ministers of education and training (McGinn, 2000; Namuddu, 1998).

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