

“Japanese Educational Aid in the Face of a Paradigm Shift”

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Diversification of actors and norms in the international development arena

(1) Normative change

Major donors including the World Bank and JICA, have revised their education sector assistance strategies in the last couple of years. The new strategies reflect the changing paradigm in this field. In contrast to the earlier period when the universal access to and quality of school-based basic education have been commonly aimed at, the recent strategy papers shows less unified tones. Thanks to the harmonized efforts of donors and the respective national governments, many developing countries achieved (or nearly achieved) goals of expanding access. Yet, there is a large school-aged population who do not enjoy the opportunity of schooling. Therefore, inclusion of learners with special needs, girls, those in fragile states and other difficult conditions is still a major area donors claim their commitment. Also, quality issues of formal education are recognized more acutely than before, and its improvement, either in teachers, curriculum, or the school environment, continues to be one of the major focuses of aid. At the same time, it is revealed that the shared assumption underlying Millennium Development Goals that universal basic education will lead to poverty reduction is not always realized. Students who finish basic education pressure on greater access to the next stage of education. Also, going to basic schools alone does not guarantee employment or betterment of life, unless there are additional efforts to improve relevance of school education to students' background and world of work. Now, it is recognized that the opportunities of learning are not restricted within school and for school-aged population. Therefore, one of the directions of new assistance strategies is to highlight “learning for all” which is typically visible in the World Bank's case. As such, the norms on educational development became much diverse than the previous period when achieving MDGs and universal basic education were agreed like a golden rule. The comparison of the amounts of ODA to education between 2004 and 2008 (slide 3) indicates that such normative change has been reflected to the subsectoral distribution of educational ODA which is rapidly diversifying.

(2) Emergence of New Actors and Changes in Aid Structure

In 2005, Paris High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness was organized by OECD and French government, at which 100 national governments – both developed and developing countries – and international organizations have endorsed the declaration to improve alignment and partnership among donors to improve aid effectiveness and to foster recipient country ownership.

Such consensus is built on the assumption that the DAC donors unanimously wish to build a common aid structure and maintain its order. In fact, there have been donors which have struggled to follow that expectation, such as Japan. The Japanese aid is characterized by the hands-on implementation of projects, while the global consensus has centered on program-based assistance, which is support of overall policies without specification of activities or direct commitment to implementation. In the last 15 years or so, Japan has faced

constant pressure to explain the reasons for not adopting the program-based assistance and to justify its uniqueness.

In the last few years, however, the landscape of international educational assistance has changed with the emergence of the group of donors which have formerly recipients of aid but rapidly increasing their presence as donors. The countries include Korea, China, and India among others. Except for Korea which joined OECD-DAC in 2009, most of them are not OECD/DAC members, the forum at which members are required to follow or, at least, explain their position regarding the aid effectiveness. Rather, they are keen to develop their unique models of assistance to differentiate themselves from traditional ones. When only a few countries did not adopt the agreed modalities, they were considered “outliers”. However, when there is a tide of non-traditional donors rising, it becomes impossible to exclude them for their non-conformity. As a result, the paths to provide aid also became diverse, in addition to the expansion of the range of norms guiding today’s international educational assistance. Busan High-level Forum of Aid Effectiveness, which was held in South Korea in November 2011, highlighted South-South and Triangular cooperation and collaboration with the private sector. Different from the binary contrast between budget support/program-based assistance and projects in the earlier period, wider range of aid modalities are accepted in the discourse. In this emerging situation, norms, paths, and actors of international development are less clear and tight. Then, the question is how to locate and identify the role of Japanese ODA in the field of education.

Efforts to Identify “Japanese Model”

In the history of Japanese ODA, human resources development has always been at the very core. The point is articulated clearly both in the ODA Charter and the Mid-Term Policy for ODA (2005), together constituting the basic policy documents for Japan’s ODA. The ODA charter was first issued in 1992, after 3 years since Japan became the top bilateral ODA provider. In the section titled Philosophy, the document states “Taking advantage of Japan’s experience as the first nation in Asia to become a developed country, Japan has utilized its ODA to actively support economic and social infrastructure development, human resource development, and institution building (p. 1).” Human resource development is a pillar of ODA provided by Japan, which envisaged itself as an Asian former developing country joined the camp of aid providers. This pillar is also in line with Japan’s principle of “the assistance for self-help efforts” by developing countries. Japan, having gone through a history as a developing country itself, has taken the stance to stand by the side of assisted countries while they make efforts for their own advancement. Human resource development has been seen as an important factor to boost this process of self-supported development.

The geographic focus has expanded from East Asia and ASEAN in the early 1990s to Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world. Also, the types of assistance have changed. Traditionally, Japanese educational assistance has been directed toward industrial skills development and human resource development in science and technology fields at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Such areas of assistance are closely related to the philosophy of supporting self-help effort; namely, the formation of industrial and technological human capital is considered as a basis for countries to achieve economic development with their own capacity. Therefore, even today, science and engineering at the higher education level is one of the fields Japan has successful experiences represented by the projects such as AUN/SEED-Net or E-JUST.

At the same time, in the last 20 years or so, Japan has accumulated experience in

supporting basic education and teacher education. In contrast to the earlier period when Japan mostly focused on infrastructure building, in the last two decades, many education projects have aimed to develop capacity of teachers, professionals and administrators of education ministries through collaborative work with Japanese experts. In-service training of teachers, especially the science and mathematics teachers, has always been the area of strength for Japan, which is exemplified by SMASSE-WECSA project. Recently, there are many projects to support community-based school management; the oft-cited example of this type is Ecole pour Tous project in Francophone West Africa.

From the early 1990s, the desire to develop “Japanese model” of development assistance has persisted in the minds of Japanese ODA practitioners. Hands-on technical transfer is a characteristic of Japanese ODA, in which not only practical skills but also attitude and ethos of Japanese teachers and professionals are believed to be transferred, so that the counterpart staff will acquire the active commitment for self-help development. For such hands-on capacity development to be effective, the assistance activities require close commitments of Japanese experts which are not possible in the budget support or program-based assistance.

Japan has always stood on a sensitive balance: On the one hand, to align with other donor countries and organizations; on the other hand, to demonstrate its uniqueness in getting results in educational assistance. However, facing the changing paradigm and relationships among actors in the international development, Japan has to reconsider its role and position in this field.

How Can We Examine the Achievements of Educational Projects? – A case of Project “Ecole pour Tous”

When we talk of a “success” case, it has to be made clear from which aspect the project is considered successful. In the case of educational development projects, I think there are three aspects to consider: one is the alignment with the **global aid structure**; second is the **achievement of development goals**; and the third is **the feedback to the society which provide assistance**, in this case, Japan. Let me discuss these different aspects of objectives, using the case of a Japanese project which is considered successful.


Ecole pour Tous (EpT) is a JICA-funded project which supports schools to improve its management capacity and quality of education by involving community members. A factor which is considered unique and contributed to the wide success of the project is the democratic election of the member of the school management committees. While it started in Niger in a small scale, it now expanded to other Francophone African countries; Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Mali. As the field-based project expanded, it also establish the network among project members which leads to a triangular cooperation from more experienced to less experienced members in the region. In addition, the field project is evaluated to extract lessons and generalizable features so that the experiences on the ground will be sublimated as the inputs to policy dialogues in respective countries and, further, to global knowledge development. Through this kind of knowledge formation, EpT and other field projects by JICA can contribute to global partnership and align with the shared goals of improving autonomy and community participation in the school management. In sum, EpT follows the principles of Paris Declaration of partnership and result-oriented assistance although the paths to reach the goals may be uniquely Japanese. Given the diversification of the **modalities of assistance** in the recent aid structure, the Japanese educational assistance has the potential to flourish in its own manner.

While the modalities of aid are important, one should not forget to assess the effectiveness of a project according to **the development goals** of assisted societies. Given that the absolute goals of promoting community participation and autonomy in school management is to have better and equitable educational outcomes among students, we have to critically assess whether community participation promoted in EpT project actually leads to good educational outcomes. Also, it has to be examined whether community participation enhances the equity of educational opportunities and outcomes. In this sense, the results of the EpT are mixed, regardless of its widely acknowledged success. Having active community participation is, itself, not easy and there are active and passive ones among the EpT-supported schools. Moreover, there is no direct relationship between active community participation in school management and educational outcomes. Therefore, for Japan to be able to lead the formation of global knowledge base in this area, there are still rooms for trying out, accumulating experiences, and extracting lessons.

Lastly, we would need to think of the implications which the EpT has for Japanese teachers, students, and schools. This last aspect of **feedback to Japan** tends to be overlooked, but very important to maintain the momentum for educational assistance. The trend of educational reform to promote community participation affects not only developing countries but also Japan. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) of Japan pushes forward the idea of “Community School” since it revised the regulation on structure and management of local educational administration in 2004. As of April 2011, there are 789 schools which are designated as “Community Schools” having school management committees participated by school teachers, principals and community members. How is the experience of EpT comparable to the Community Schools in Japan? Is Japanese experience helpful for schools in developing countries and vice versa? These are the questions to be asked to clarify the reasons for Japan to do the educational assistance projects like EpT and strengthen the linkage between Japanese society and the ones in developing countries.

Last Thought: From “Partnership for Development” to “Partnership for Mutual Learning”

After reviewing the changing global paradigm and the historical development of Japanese educational assistance, the issue to be considered is how should be the “Japanese model” in the 21st century. The actors and norms guiding educational assistance are diversified and aid structure is less restrictive. Japan has accumulated good field experiences in the areas such as science and mathematics education, teacher education, and community participation. These would make a basis for Japanese strengths in supporting self-help efforts of developing countries, even with the reduced resources it can spend for the development assistance. What is needed at this point would be to crystallize these past experiences for the way forward. In considering this, it is also important to remind ourselves that the partnership among donors and with the assisted government for their development is not enough for the next step. We would also need to think of the “partnership for mutual learning”.



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Recent changes in the global aid discourse (1):

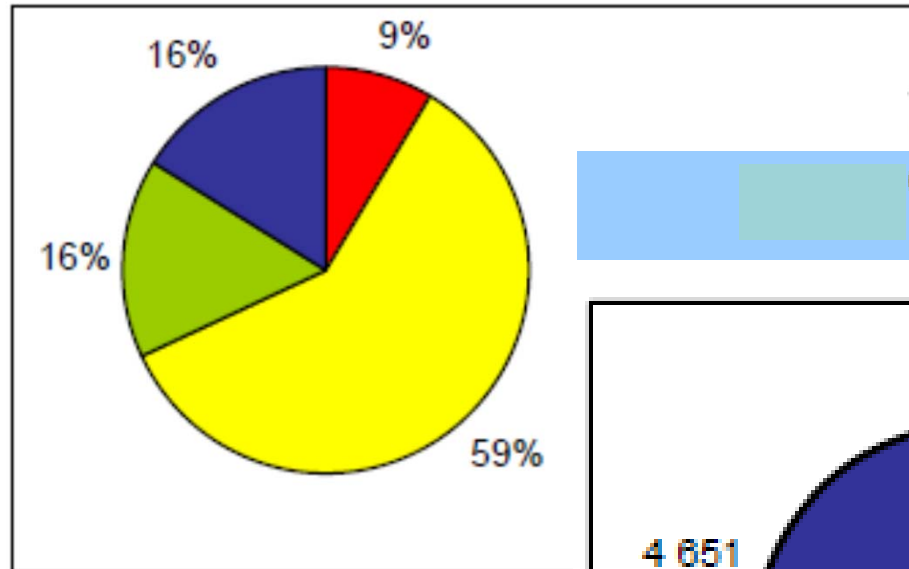
Norms on educational development

“Learning for all”

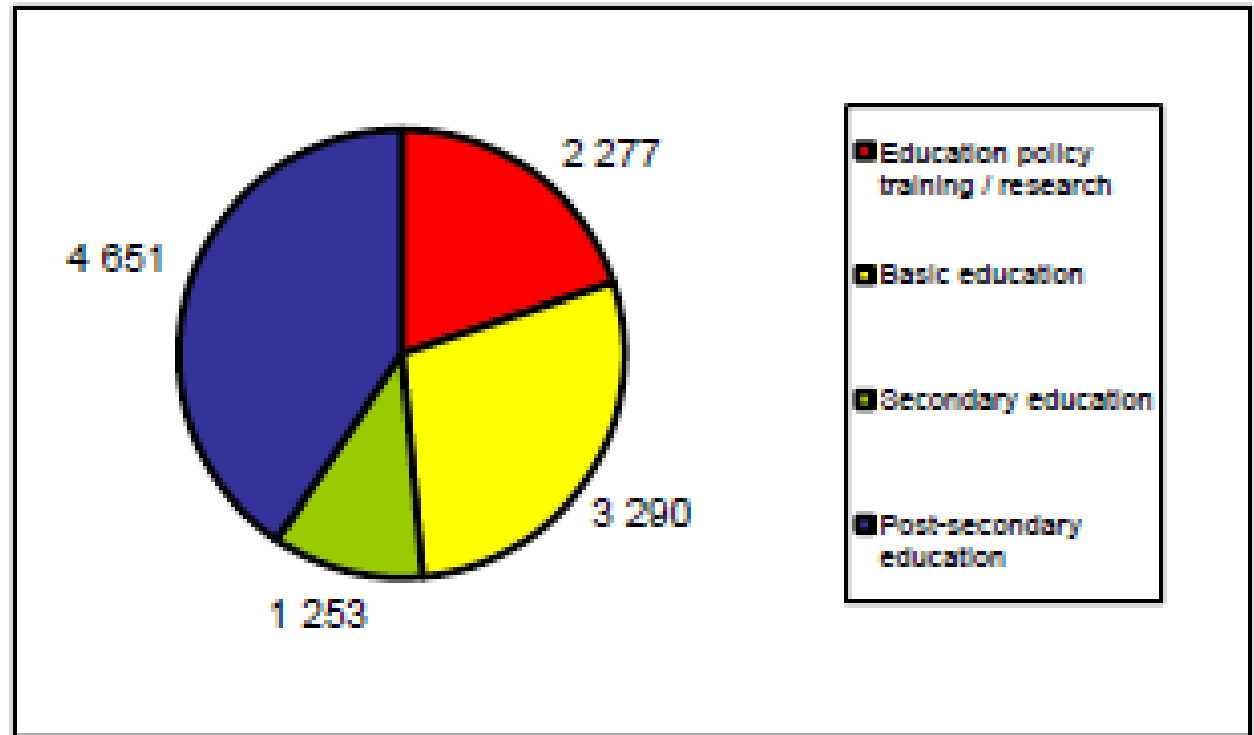
- **Quantitative expansion to quality improvement in basic education**
- **Basic education to post-basic education**
- **Skills development in formal and non-formal settings**
- **Fragile states**
- **Inclusive education**

**Diversification
of focus areas**

Education ODA by sub-sectors 2004
As percentage of total education ODA



ODA to education by subsector 2008
USD million, commitments



Source: Development aid at a glance (OECD)

Recent changes in the global aid discourse (2):

Aid Architecture

Paris Declaration (2005)

- Ownership
- Alignment
- Harmonisation
- Results
- Mutual Accountability

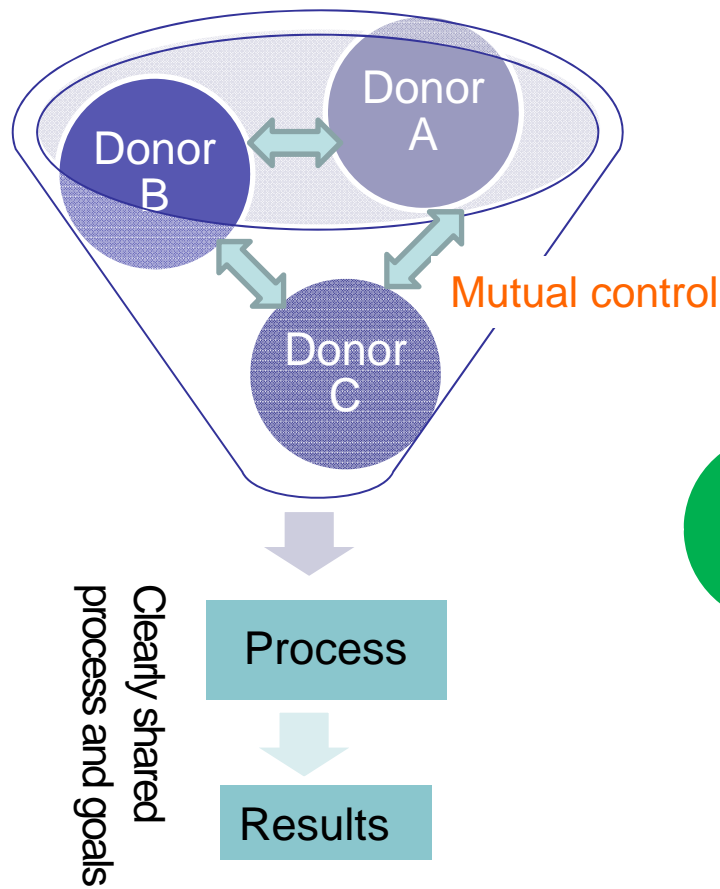
Emerging Themes in Busan High-level form (2011)

- South-South / Triangular Cooperation
- Emerging groups of donors
- Collaboration with Private sector

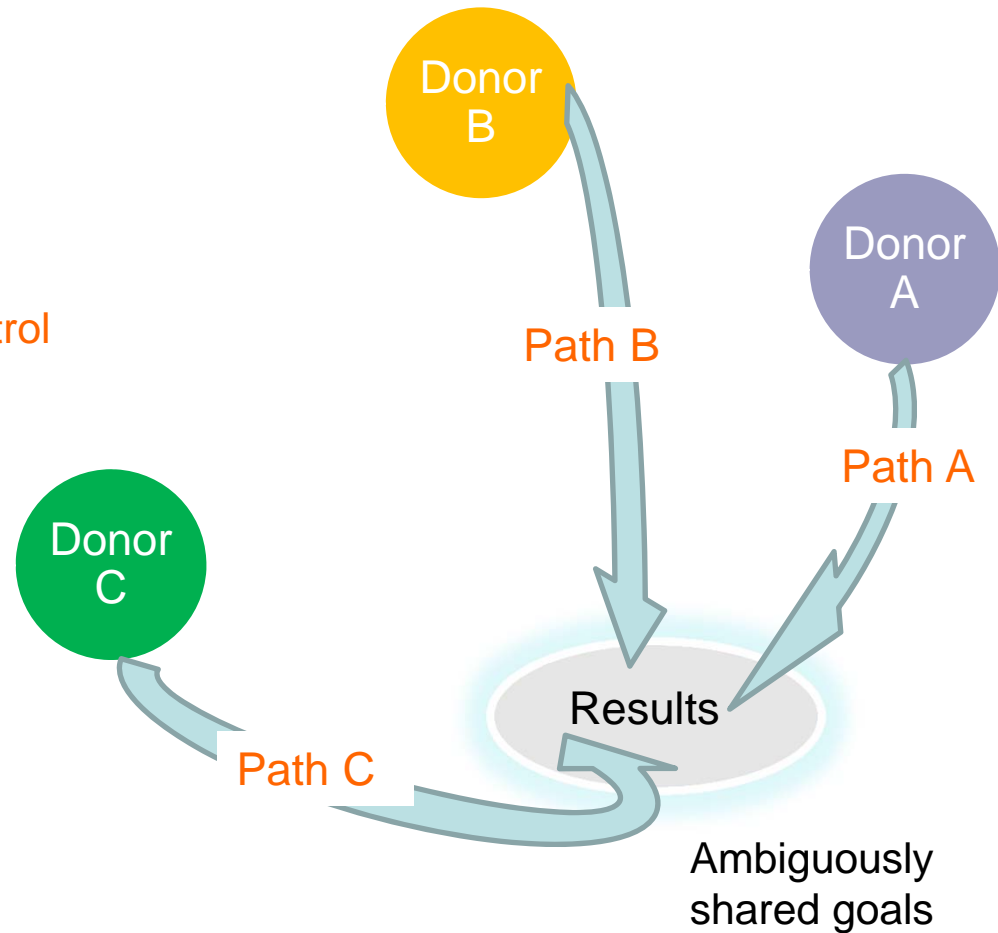
Diversification of
actors and modalities

The impacts of normative and structural changes in educational cooperation

- **FTI → Global partnership for Education**
- **Dichotomy of Budget support vs. project assistance → multiple mode of assistance**
- **Dichotomy of Like-minded vs. other donors → less control over norm-setting by the “core” group**
- **Big push → Maximizing given level of aid**



Harmonization



Diversification of actors and paths

Contested location and role of Japanese ODA

Shifting focus of Japanese ODA from the 1990s

Original ODA Charter (1992)

- “Support for self-help effort”
- East Asia and ASEAN
- “Request-based”
- Priority areas:
 - Global issues (environment, population)
 - Basic Human Needs
 - Human resource dev’t
 - Infrastructure
 - Structural adjustment

Revised ODA Charter (2003)

- “Support for self-help effort”
- Wider geographic coverage
- Proactive policy dialogue
- Additional priority areas:
 - Human security
 - Peace building
 - Poverty reduction

Efforts to Identify the “Japanese model”

What is the comparative advantage of Japanese aid?

- Japanese aid supported Asian economic development
 - Package of economic infrastructure building and **industrial skills training (TVET + higher ed)** → private sector investment (**Public-Private partnership**)
- The experience of Japan itself to have achieved industrialization from the ash after the WWII
 - “The History of Japan’s Educational Development”(JICA 2004)
 - Investing in people – **Capacity development** for self-help development
- Hands-on transfer of technology through **technical cooperation**

Characteristics of Japanese educational assistance

2010 MOFA and JICA education strategy papers

- **project-type and field-based operation**
 - Sensitivity to specific contexts
- **Capacity development of teachers, professionals and administrators of education ministries through collaborative work with Japanese experts:**
 - Pedagogical capacity
 - Attitudinal (higher commitment)
 - Administrative capacity

“Good practices” of Japanese educational aid projects

In-service teacher education (INSET) in science and mathematics

e.g. SMASSE-WECSA(Africa)

Community-based school management

e.g. Ecole pour tous (West Africa)

Science and engineering at the higher education level

e.g. AUN/SEED-Net (Southeast Asia) – network of university engineering programs

e.g. E-JUST (Egypt) – partnering Japanese and assisted country universities in science and engineering

A case of Japanese cooperation:

Community participation

Project “Ecole pour Tous” (EpT)

Improving management and quality of education at the school level by involving community members

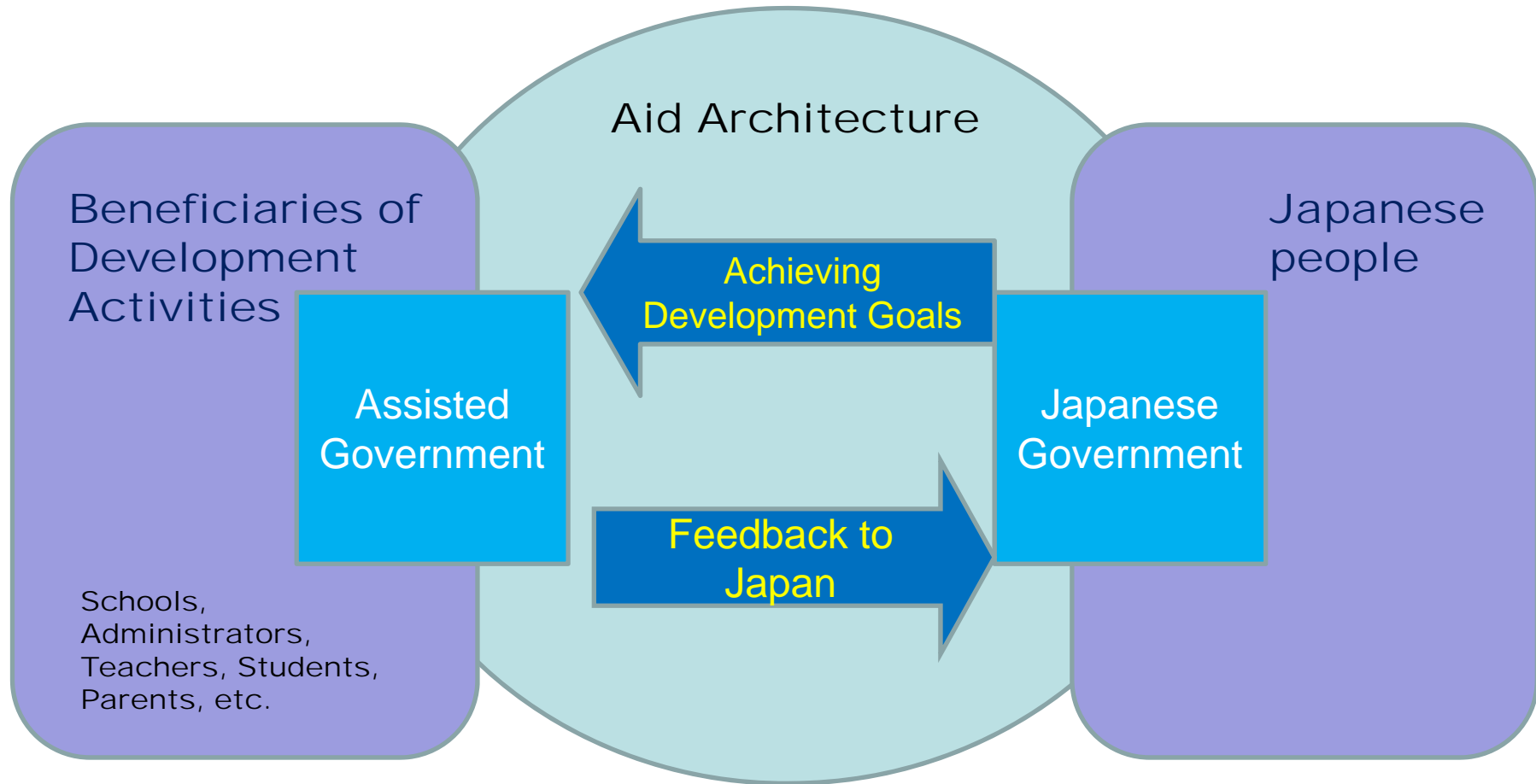
- **Field projects** in Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali
- **Networking** for sharing experience
 - COGES network
 - Inter-project network → **Triangular cooperation**
- **Impact evaluation** of field projects → Policy dialogue and input for global knowledge development → **Global partnership; alignment**

Further Consideration

Which objectives does this project serve?

Aid architecture	Development goals	Feedback to Japan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project, the path which Japan takes to achieve goal, is consistent with the principles of partnership and alignment• Triangular cooperation is a model which Japan has a lot of successful experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EpT experiments and accumulates cases to single out factors for successful community participation• Does successful community participation lead to good educational outcomes?• Does community participation enhance the equity of educational opportunities and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the experience of EpT comparable to the school-based management and the Community School initiative in Japan?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similarity and differences• Is Japanese experience helpful for schools in developing countries?• Can Japanese schools and their teachers learn from EpT?

Relationships among different types of objectives



From “Partnership for Development” to “partnership for Mutual Learning”

- **What would be the “Japanese model” of educational cooperation in the 21st century?**
 - **Less resources but long experience**
 - **Investment in people for self-help development**
 - **Field-level impacts**
- **How would Japanese schools and their education be able to learn from and link with educational development activities?⁴**