


Why international cooperation for basic education was a “taboo” in Japan?



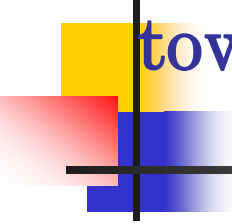
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Aid for basic education: a priority

- International assistant agencies and most donor countries including Japan have shifted their policy priority towards basic education.
- In 2002, Prime Minister Koizumi declared BEGIN (Basic Education for Growth Initiative) as Japanese basic principle and policies in the field of international cooperation in education.



Dominance of Negative or diffident attitude toward basic education assistance

- Until about 15 years ago, Japan was so reluctant to commit itself to aid for basic education in developing countries.
- Negative or diffident attitude toward basic education assistance was widely prevailing among Japanese assistance community.
- The popular discourses sometimes regarded intervention to basic education of foreign countries as a “taboo”

Retrospect of Prof. Utsumi



- “When the Study Group of JICA made the final report 10 years ago, it was very difficult to assign the highest priority of aid to basic education. In the development assistance circle including JICA, international cooperation for basic education was seen as a taboo. Nowadays, it may be hard to imagine the prevailing atmosphere at that time” (2005)



Roots of the Taboo discourse

- When and for what reasons did such a negative or diffident attitude toward aid to basic education come into being and take root among the Japanese people concerned with foreign assistance?

Beginnings of aid in education



- In 1954, Japan started international education aid in two different ways.
- Foreign student scholarship program mainly targeting students from Asian countries and Middle East to contribute to human resource development in these countries.
- Membership of the Colombo Plan (UK and USA- initiated development assistance program to Asian countries).

Concerns for aid in primary education



- Supporting the UNESCO-initiated Karachi Plan, which aimed to achieve universal compulsory primary education in Asia by 1980.
- More interests in and felt a mission of assisting Asian countries to develop their education systems.

Dispatch of study teams to developing countries



- In 1961, Ministry of Education sent study teams to Southeast Asia and Middle East to investigate their educational conditions and the possibility of Japanese cooperation.
- Proposal of the principles for education aid policy



Principles on Educational Cooperation


- (1) It should be based on highly humanitarian idea,
- (2) It must comply with their real conditions and their needs,
- (3) It must be touching a chord of the heart of the recipient nations,
- (4) Education cooperation should be preceded or accompanied by economic cooperation

Cooperation for Karachi Plan



- UNESCO's first regional conference of the Ministers of Education in Tokyo to review the progress of Karachi Plan in April 1962.
- Remark of Mr. Amagi
- Articles on international cooperation in education in the official journal of the Ministry of Education.

Cooperation Programs undertaken by MOE in 1960s



- Science education cooperation program (1966)
- Invitation of educational leaders (1966)
- Donation of the chair of Japanese Studies to universities in Asia (with MOFA 1965)
- UNESCO International Graduate Course in field of chemical engineering in TIT. (1965)
- UNESCO-NIER Regional Program for Educational Research in Asian (1967)
- Mobile Training Teams Program (1970) in cooperation with UNESCO

Promotion of educational operation in the context of review of ODA policy

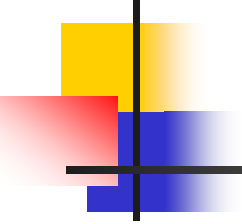
- Japan's economic presence.
- Increasing frustration and resentment among Asian countries
- “economic animal”
- Criticism to Japanese foreign aid policy (giving preference to the tied loan over grants) as mainly seeking Japan's own commercial interests.
- Review of its overall assistance policy.
- Establishment of the External Economic Cooperation Council (1969)

Report of External Economic Cooperation Council (1971)



- Strengthening technical cooperation to developing countries, especially in the fields of health care, culture and education
- Sensibility to the sovereignty and nationalism in education aid

Argument on education aid of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1971)



- “From this perspective, and based on our own experience from the Meiji era, we think that it should be given the top priority to educational cooperation for developing countries to support that they get firm footing for their nation-building”.

Reluctant attitude to aid in basic education



- Because education is a delicate matter that involved the matter of sovereignty and nationalism of the recipient countries, it must be treated with prudently for not to be intrusive.
- Aid activity should be confined to support for strengthening infrastructures (so called indirect cooperation) such as supplying school buildings, education facilities, textbooks, teaching materials and audio-visual equipments

Research Council on Educational Cooperation for Asian Countries



- In August 1971, an ad hoc Research Council on Educational Cooperation for Asian Countries was established under the Ministry of Education.
- The members of the council and task force staff represented various fields and sectors, including high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The council dispatched research missions to 6 countries to investigate their needs for educational cooperation.

Report of the Research Council(1972)



- In March 1972, the council presented its final report, which consisted of (1) basic concepts of educational cooperation, (2) priority areas in cooperation, and (3) strengthening of relevant domestic structures and communication links



Basic principles in Educational Cooperation

- (a) In the educational cooperation, a careful attention to languages, culture, history and national values of recipient countries should be paid;
- (b) the most effective policy must be adopted based on their requests,. In Asian countries, aid for development of primary and secondary education should be given priority;
- (c) Primary target area should be Southeast Asian nations; and
- (d) Educational cooperation should be promoted under the mutual understanding based on the intimate human relationship with the counterparts of recipient countries.

Proposals for the cooperation in basic education (1)



- Such matters as educational administration and improvement of contents of education basically belong to their jurisdiction
- We should put emphasis on the indirect cooperation such as improving of quality of education through the support for teacher education, in-service teacher training, and supplying educational equipments



Proposals on the cooperation in basic education (2) (3)

- Construction and supply of Teaching Training Center as an institutional base for integrated and continuous cooperation for in-service training of teachers
- In some Asian countries experimental Model Schools are established for innovation in primary and secondary education. It seems to be effective way to support such schools.



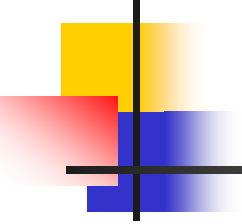
General orientation of the report

- General orientation for education cooperation seemed to have aligned with the original ideas of Ministry of Education
- Primary and secondary education field is the main focus of international cooperation in education
- Redefinition of indirect cooperation
- Negative attitude of officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs seemed to have been somewhat relaxed

Discussions in Central Council of Education (1972-74)



- Deliberating on a wide range of policies and activities relevant to international exchange in education and culture. International cooperation for developing countries was also discussed among them.
- Recommend the policies and activities that consisted of 12 items covering almost all forms of the proposed bilateral and multilateral cooperation



Less priority given to international cooperation

- Mainly advocated to cultivate Japanese people who would live in international society and would be worthy of reverence and respect
- International cooperation to developing countries was given less priority compared with domestic-oriented (inward-looking) international education policies

Difficulty in putting policies into actions



- At the stage of implementing proposed activities, Ministry of Education encountered many impenetrable difficulties
- Lack of experiences and technical know-how for the bilateral cooperation and qualified personnel

Establishment of JICA



- At the end of 1973, there occurred intense bureaucratic struggle in the government for establishing new agencies for international cooperation
- Finally agreed to create a new technical cooperation agency, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), integrating two agencies under MOFA (OTCA and Oversea Emigration Service) and absorbing the functions of two agencies proposed by MITI and MAF

Distant relation between MOE and JICA



- In hasty and intricate process of creation of JICA, Ministry of Education was almost totally excluded
- Although MOE had some stake in JICA through education cooperation, even a middle-class position was not allotted to it
- MOE failed to establish good relationship and to exchange personnel and technical know-how with JICA

Withdrawal from bilateral cooperation programs



- Withdrawal of MOE from a small number of bilateral cooperation programs that they had administrated
- Science education cooperation program that MOE originated in 1966 and entrusted their logistic tasks to OTCA was totally transferred to JICA in 1976.
- Invitation program for educational leaders was also discontinued

Ideological conversion of MOE



- A psychological justification for the unachieved wish
- JICA could not manage cooperation programs in basic education without support and expertise of MOE
- JICA should not touch basic education
- Basic education was originally an untouchable sanctuary that did not permit external intervention



Other reasons of neglect of primary education project

- Aid for a vast basic education system is a task like working in a bottomless pit
- Less dependent on foreign currency, less commercial return to the donor country
- basic education project lacks visibility or demonstrative effects
- Project such as building a large number of primary schools in wide area takes more construction cost than building a single university

Long missing link in the international cooperation for education in MOE

- Ministry of Education had again interests in and felt a mission for assisting developing countries to develop their basic education after WCEFA held at Jomtien in 1990
- Long missing link a span of 20 years in the international cooperation for basic education
- Repairing the relationship between MOE and JICA