

Development of international cooperation in education in Japan

Dr. Yasuo SAITO

Researcher Emeritus, National Institute for
Educational Policy Research (NIER)

Aid for basic education: a priority

- From 1990s on, international assistant agencies and most donor countries including Japan have shifted their policy priority towards basic education.
- From the middle of the 1990s, policies and activities on international cooperation in education in Japan also have made rapid strides .
- 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.

“boom” in the international cooperation in education 1

- 1990.3 World Conference on Education for All.
- 1990.3 MOE and MOFA established jointly FASID「国際開発高等教育機構」
- 1990.6 JICA organized “Study Group on Education Assistance”「教育援助検討会」
- 1991.4 Establishment of GSID in Nagoya University including the section of educational development
- 1992.9 JICA established ad hoc “Study committee on Development and Education”「教育と開発 分野別援助研究会」
- 1993.10 TICAD I was held in Japan 第一回アフリカ開発会議
- 1994.1 Publication of the final report of the JICA committee
- 1995.12 Ministry of Education established “Study Council on the International Cooperation in Education” 文部省「国際教育協力の在り方に関する懇談会」
- 1996 Starting the exchange of officials between JICA and MOE
- 1996.6 First Report of Study Council of MOE 『時代に即応した国際教育協力の推進について』

“boom” in the international cooperation in education 2

- 1997.4 Foundation of Center for Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE) in Hiroshima University 広島大学教育開発国際協力研究センター
- 1999.4 Establishment of ICCAE in Nagoya University 名古屋大学「農学国際教育協力研究センター」
- 2000.11 Publication of the Second Report of Study Council of MOE『開発途上国への教育協力方策について』
- 2001.1 In MOE, Section of International Interchange Policy was established 文部科学省国際課国際交流政策室設置
- 2001.4 Launching the special “Teachers Participation Program” in JOCV 青年海外協力隊「現職教員特別参加制度」発足
- 2001.11 Starting the program for assisting educational development in Afghanistan アフガニスタン教育支援発足
- 2002.1 MOE reorganized the Section for International Cooperation Policy 文部科学省国際課国際協力政策室に改組
- 2002.4 Foundation of CRICED in Tsubota University 筑波大学教育開発国際協力研究センター設置
- 2002.4 Establishment of CALE in Nagoya University 名古屋大学「法政国際教育協力研究センター」設置

“boom” in the international cooperation in education 3

- 2002.6 Government of Japan announced the Basic Education for Growth Initiative(BEGIN) 「成長のための基礎教育イニシアティブ」
- 2002.7 Publication of the Final Report of Study Council of MOE
- 2003 MOE starts the subsidy program for the studies in international cooperation in the field of primary and Secondary education 「拠点システム」事業開始
- 2004.2 Start of holding of Japan Education Forum(JEF) 国際教育協力日本フォーラム
- 2005.11 MOFA announced the leaflet “We want to learn: Educational cooperation of Japan”
- 2006.8 Study Council of MOE published the report “Intellectual contributions of universities in the field of international cooperation 『大学発知のODA——知的国際貢献に向けて』
- 2010.9 Government of Japan announced “Policy for the International Cooperation in Education of Japan: 2011-2015” 「日本の教育協力政策 2011-2015年」

Dominance of Negative or diffident attitude toward basic education assistance

- Until the middle of the 1990s, 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 (2005)

- “When the Study Committee of JICA made the final report 10 years ago(1994), 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”

*Utsumi was then the chief of the secretariat of the Study Committee of JICA.

Roots of the Taboo discourse

- Ascending the dates of beginning of international cooperation in education in Japan, we have about 50 years of history in this field.
- In the 1960s ,there appeared concerns and modest will for the international cooperation in education among Japanese educators .
- And in the early part of the 1970s, there took place a controversy on this new enterprise and there was an endeavor to establish a national policy for international cooperation in education .
- 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?

Concerns for aid in primary education

- In 1960, in Asia, Karachi Plan was launched.
- In the 1960s, in the process of supporting the UNESCO-initiated Karachi Plan, which aimed to achieve universal compulsory primary education in Asia by 1980, the officials of the Ministry of Education became more interested in and felt a mission of assisting Asian countries to develop their education systems.
- As an activity for supporting Karachi Plan, 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.

Principles on Educational Cooperation

- Based on the study teams' reports, Ministry of Education discussed the basic ideas on the Japanese education cooperation policy as follows ;
- (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,
- This was the first document in Japan that claimed a basic philosophy on the international cooperation in education.

Remark of Mr. Amagi, a high-ranking official of MOE

- “For Asian countries, implementation of Karachi Plan is not an easy task. Japan stands in comparatively favorable position over Asian countries on this matter. We are expected to provide assistance not only in the form of sharing experience, knowledge and technology but also in material and financial aspects. But in this case, the developing country side should not resign to make their own effort while demanding external supports. On the other hand, we must have great humility for taking into consideration their conditions and wishes. National education is a country’s own domestic matter that has something to do with the foundation of national mentality. With a full consciousness of this point, we must make effort to cooperate as much as possible”

Cooperation Programs undertaken by MOE in the 1960s

- Science education cooperation program (1966)
(Dispatch of science education experts together with the supply of equipments and materials to five countries)
- Invitation of educational leaders (1966)
(High-ranking educational administrators from 5 countries for study tour in Japan)
- 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 (Tokodai). (1965)
- UNESCO-NIER Regional Program for Educational Research in Asian (1967)
- Mobile Training Teams Program (1970) in cooperation with UNESCO

Review of Japanese ODA policy in the 1970s

- In the late 1960s, Japan was achieving rapid economic development and began accumulating up huge trade surplus. Asian countries were overwhelmed by Japan's economic presence. They began to call Japan the “economic animal”. They also criticized Japanese foreign aid policy as mainly seeking Japan's own commercial interests (giving preference to the tied loan program over grants).
- Under the increasing criticism and complaints in Asian countries against the Japanese economic aid policy, the Japanese government undertook a review of its overall assistance policy. It installed the External Economic Cooperation Council (1969) as an advisory body to Prime Minister to deliberate on new policies for economic cooperation and technical assistance.

Report of External Economic Cooperation Council (1971)

- In July 1971, the council presented a report. In order to change the image of Japanese economic cooperation, the council advocated a new policy strengthening technical cooperation to developing countries, especially in the fields of health care, culture and **education**.
- Although the government council proposed to promote cooperation in the field of education, at the same time, the report emphasized that because education had to do with the sovereignty and nationalism of the developing countries, **it must be especially sensitive to intervene to general national (basic) education**.

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

- One month later, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its Economic Cooperation Bureau, issued a document titled “How to progress international cooperation in education”.
- In it, they said, “Reflecting that the dominance of commercial concerns in our economic cooperation program has brought about anti-Japanese criticism in some Southeast Asian countries, from now on, we must increase aid with non-economic components. From this perspective, and based on our own experience from the Meiji era, we think that it should be given **the top priority to education cooperation for developing countries** to support that they get firm footing for their nation-building”.

Reluctant attitude to aid in basic education of MOFA side

- While promoting the education cooperation, MOFA report also warned that because education was a delicate matter involved the matter of sovereignty and nationalism of the recipient countries, it must be treated prudently so as not to be intrusive.
- In primary education area, on grounds that they were afraid of being met with strong opposition against provoking their nationalistic sentiment, they insisted that aid activity should be confined to support for strengthening infrastructures such as supplying school buildings, education facilities, textbooks, teaching materials and audio-visual equipments.
- MOFA, from the diplomatic point of view, seemed to have been somewhat nervous about that interfering in basic education would provoke their nationalistic sentiments.

Research Council on Educational Cooperation for Asian Countries in MOE

- In August 1971, an ad hoc “Research Council on Educational Cooperation for Asian Countries” 「アジア教育協力研究協議会」 was established under the Ministry of Education to discuss and propose a national policy in the field of educational cooperation.
- 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.
- 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.**

Main points of the research council report

- General orientation for education cooperation seemed to have aligned with the original ideas of Ministry of Education and the negative attitude of officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs seemed to have been somewhat relaxed
- Primary and secondary education field is the main focus of international cooperation in education
- In the primary education, the **indirect cooperation** such as improving of quality of education through the support for teacher education, in-service teacher training, and supplying educational equipments was emphasized.
- As an institutional base for integrated and continuous cooperation for in-service training of teachers, construction and supply of **Teaching(Teacher) Training Center** was proposed.

Difficulty of putting policies into actions

- However, at the stage of implementing proposed activities, Ministry of Education encountered many difficulties. Differing from the multilateral cooperation through UNESCO, they virtually lacked experiences and technical know-how for the bilateral cooperation.
- One official of international section of the MOE expressed their anxiety ; “We do not have enough knowledge on the conditions of Asian countries. With respect to languages as mean of verbal communication, we are not good at speaking even English and have very poor proficiency in Asian languages. More basically we have too little experience in the external aid. We are not ready not only mentally, but also in terms of accumulating knowledge and skills for aid. In fact, we feel anxiety that how many people that have necessary qualification and capacity for education aid toward Asian countries could be mobilized”

Change of the priority in the MOE's international policy

- Three months after the publication of the research report, the Minister of Education commissioned the Central Council of Education to deliberate the issue of international exchange in the field of education and culture.
- International cooperation for developing countries was also discussed among them. In 1974, CCE submitted a report on “International Exchange in Education, Research and Culture” to the Minister. In section (5) Cooperation for developing countries, the report recommended the policies and activities that consisted of 12 items covering almost all forms of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation that have been discussed in those days.

Less priority given to international cooperation for developing countries

- However, in the CCE report, the main point advocated was to cultivate Japanese people who would live in the international society and would be worthy of reverence and respect.
- In the order of priority, international cooperation for developing countries was given less attention compared with domestic-oriented (inward-looking) international education policies such as education for Japanese children living overseas and returnee students, education for international understanding, and improvement of facilities for receiving foreign scholars and students.

Establishment of JICA

- Meanwhile, at the end of 1973, there occurred intense bureaucratic struggle in the government for establishing new agencies for international cooperation. Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) made a budget request to Ministry of Finance (MOF) to establish their own aid agencies.
- 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. Powerful Ministries like MOF, MOFA, MITI and MAF gained and shared powers and high-rank positions in JICA.
- 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.
- The positive will and the morale of officials of MOE toward international cooperation met with a setback.

Withdrawal from bilateral cooperation programs

- MOE shortly decided to withdraw even from a small number of bilateral cooperation programs that they had administrated.
- The science education cooperation program that MOE originated in 1966 and entrusted their logistic tasks to OTCA was totally transferred to JICA in 1976.
- The program of inviting educational leaders was also discontinued.
- Teacher (Teaching) Training Center project, promoted in both reports of Research Council on Educational Cooperation for Asian Countries and CCE, ended up being an unfulfilled project.

Ideological conversion of MOE

- To withdraw from these programs, probably they needed some justifications.
- Officials of MOE thought that JICA could not manage cooperation programs in the basic education without support and expertise of MOE. Based on that conviction, they proceed to claim that JICA should not touch basic education.
- Still further they convinced themselves that basic education was originally an untouchable sanctuary that did not permit external intervention. They also became to take side of the MOFA's reluctant attitude toward basic education.
- From then on, the taboo discourse on the basic education became preponderant among Japanese assistance community as if it was a national consensus.

Other reasons of neglecting primary education project

- On the other hand, in the aid community, projects in basic education have been kept away by other reasons.
- According to Prof. Ushiogi, reasons were as follows:
- First, they presume that the aid for a vast basic education system is a task like working in a bottomless pit, so it is difficult to achieve sensible results.
- Second, as basic education projects were less dependent on foreign currency spending, such project brings less commercial return to the donor country.
- Thirdly, compared with big infrastructure projects, basic education projects lacked visibility or demonstrative effects.
- Finally, the projects such as building a large number of primary schools in wide area took more construction cost than building a single university. They preferred projects in higher education and vocational training which included massive infrastructure building components.

Long missing link in the international cooperation for education in MOE

- It was after WCEFA held at Jomtien in 1990 that the officials of the Ministry of Education had again interests in and felt a vocation for assisting developing countries to develop their basic education.
- At least on the side of MOE, there was a long missing link a span of 20 years in the international cooperation for basic education.
- It was also recognized that it was vital to repair the relationship between MOE and JICA. In this context, from the late 1990s, a series of cooperative activities between two organizations to promote international cooperation for basic education in developing countries was started.

参考文献

- アジア教育協力研究協議会『アジア諸国に対する教育協力のあり方について』 1972年3月
- 国際協力事業団『開発と教育 分野別援助研究会報告書』1994年1月
- 斉藤泰雄『わが国の国際教育協力の理念及び政策の歴史的系譜に関する研究』(科研費研究報告書) 2011年3月
- 斉藤 泰雄「わが国の国際教育協力の理念及び政策の歴史的系譜:草創期から70年代初頭まで」『国立教育政策研究所紀要』第137 集 2008年3月
- 斉藤泰雄「わが国の基礎教育援助タブー論の歴史的ルーツ」『国際教育協力論集』第11巻第2 号 2008年10月
- 文部省大臣官房調査課『アジア教育協力について』1972年3月
- 文部省『教育・学術・文化における国際交流』(中教審答申) 1975年3月
- Kamibeppu T., History of Japanese Policies in Education Aid to Developing Countries, 1950s-1990s. Routledge 2002