

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

1. Understanding of the present situation

(1) Why is it necessary to support education?

Around the world, 58 million primary school-age children still remain out of school. More than half of them are girls, and 36% of them are in conflict-affected and fragile countries (UNESCO, 2015). Regarding quality of education, at least 250 million children worldwide, nearly 40% of the primary school-age children, are thought to have failed to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills (UNESCO, 2014). Disparities in school attendance and learning due to the factors associated with poverty, gender, disability, ethnicity, language and residential areas, make it an urgent priority to guarantee that all children receive quality education irrespective of their backgrounds. To cope with a rapid improvement in the ratio of children receiving primary education, it is also essential to expand and improve pre-primary education and secondary education.

Youth unemployment has been on an upward trend. 225 million young people have neither entered school, nor received vocational training nor in employment (ILO, 2014). To address youth unemployment, it is necessary to expand access to technical and vocational education and training and improve their quality.

While access to higher education has been steadily improving (enrolment in developing countries was 16% in 2004 and 29% in 2014; UNESCO, 2015), the pace of developing the teaching force, upgrading educational facilities and equipment, and securing research funds is lagging behind, leaving significant challenges in terms of the quality of higher education and research.

(2) Japan's efforts

Recognizing the importance of education as the basis of national development, Japan amassed extensive experience in advancing science and industrial development through both comprehensive and gradual educational development especially since the start of the modernization process in the Meiji era.

Based on this experience, Japan has actively engaged in educational cooperation. In "Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth" published in September 2015, Japan adopted a policy that places a strong emphasis on educational cooperation for inclusive and equitable quality education, for human resource development conducive to industrial and scientific/technological development, and for sustainable social and economic development. In "Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" published in May 2016, Japan also put its focus on the promotion and strengthening of girls' education as the foundation on which each and every individual

can fulfil their own potential.

(3) JICA's strength

Joining forces with its counterparts in partner countries, JICA is working on education improvements from down at the school level up to policy formulation discourse, and is promoting and replicating good practices nationwide.

Also, in addition to supporting engineering universities, JICA has endeavored to create a knowledge network to facilitate student exchange within regions and joint research projects to identify solutions to the issues commonly faced by countries in Asia, Africa and other regions.

Since 2000, JICA has built more than 5,500 primary and secondary schools in 46 countries, trained 870,000 teachers in 42 countries, and improved school-based management at 62,000 schools in 16 countries. Working with partners in the industrial sector, JICA also executed 50 human resource development projects in 27 countries involving support of 30 engineering universities in 17 countries and accepted 12,000 students from abroad (JICA, 2015).

2. Priority targets

Education is a fundamental right, innate to all people. Education is a powerful engine for sustainable growth and plays a significant role as an enabler in achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nurturing respect for diversity and different values through education lays a solid foundation for inclusive and peaceful societies.

In achieving the seven targets of Goal 4, JICA prioritizes the following points in its operations:

Targets which JICA will focus based on JICA's strength

- **4.1 Completion of free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education for all girls and boys**
- **4.3 Equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university**

Targets which JICA will tackle with enthusiasm based on the importance of children's long-term development

- **4.2 Quality early childhood development and care, and pre-primary education for all girls and boys**

Cross-sectoral targets which JICA will tackle in all projects

- **4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable**
- **4.7 Acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable**

development

Targets which JICA will tackle according to country or regional issues

- **4.4 Increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills necessary for employment, decent job and entrepreneurship**
- **4.6 Achieve literacy and numeracy of all youth and adults, both men and women**

3. Priority efforts to achieve the goals

Taking a holistic view of the education sector, ranging from pre-primary, primary and secondary, to technical and vocational education and training, higher education and non-formal education, JICA supports the partner countries to realize quality “Learning Continuity” to meet each individual’s learning needs.

JICA will promote “**Mutual Learning**” on a global scale, beyond countries and regions, to solve global issues through seminars and joint research, based on analysis and sharing of the experience and expertise gained from its cooperation. JICA will create innovative solutions collaboratively by linking diverse stakeholders, such as private sector, universities, research institutes, and NGOs.

(1) Improvement in children’s learning

JICA will support partner countries’ efforts to support children not only acquire the basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, but also the ability to learn and think independently and enhance their motivation for continuous learning. JICA will also pay attention to consistency and coherence between curriculum, textbooks, teaching and learning materials, lessons, and assessment and support, for, among others, the following activities:

- Curriculum development and revision
- Improvement of assessment
- Improvement of pre-service and in-service teacher training
- Promotion of mutual learning among teachers through lesson study
- Support for development of textbooks, teachers’ guides, and teaching & learning materials
- Improvement of school-based management through community participation
- Strengthening of educational administration
- Improvement of the learning environment through construction of educational facilities

Regarding pre-primary education, JICA will strengthen its support in cooperation with the health sector related to early childhood development and care, placing importance on “learning through playing” and look into scaling up the level of cooperation with primary schools.

(2) Human resource development for science, technology and innovation, and

industrial development

To solve complicated social issues and realize sustainable economic growth, it is necessary to foster human resources that encourage science, technology and innovation. In the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), JICA will not only support the acquisition of each student's basic mathematical and scientific abilities in primary and secondary education, but strengthen the education and research capacity of each country's leading engineering universities and develop human resources so that trained personnel can lead research projects, product design and development. JICA will also actively develop scholarship programs in Africa, Asia, and Oceania to support human resource development so that trained personnel will lead the educational and industrial development of their home country, strengthen the relationship with Japan, and contribute to the overall development of their country.

Highly trained engineers and technicians with versatile skill sets, such as the practical application of technical skills, a high standard of work ethics, and collaborative teamwork, are indispensable for a country's industrial development, which is a major driving force behind economic growth. Through technical and vocational education and training, JICA will support the training of engineers and technicians who can flexibly and skillfully meet the changing needs of the private sector. By expanding the access to technical and vocational education and training and improving its quality, JICA will also support the partners' efforts to address the issues of youth unemployment and to create decent work.

(3) Education for building inclusive and peaceful societies

JICA will increase its efforts to reach socially and culturally vulnerable and disadvantage populations strengthen including the poor, girls and women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and those affected by conflict or natural disasters. At the same time, JICA promotes poverty-, gender- and disability-sensitive approaches to prevent education from reproducing existing inequalities.

From the viewpoints of disabilities and education, JICA will make firm efforts for inclusion of both the tangible and intangible aspects, such as the construction of barrier-free educational facilities and the development of teaching and learning materials and teaching methods that meet the specific individual learning needs.

Girls' education is directly linked to women's empowerment. It facilitates women's economic activities, and promotes gender equality within a society. Girls' education decreases premature marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth at a younger age and has wide and positive effects in other sectors, such as a decrease in the maternal and infant mortality rate, and an improvement in the status of children's nutrition and health. JICA will strengthen the provision of cooperation in girls' education to reduce gender disparities across the whole education sector, focusing on converged and strengthened coordination with the health sector.

To the countries affected by conflicts or natural disasters, JICA will extend its support to create a safer learning environment. JICA will also help administrative officials

develop their capacity, through its scholarship programs, to become a driving force behind post-disaster recovery and the development process.

In places where out-of-school children and the illiterate still face challenges, JICA will broaden its partnership to child welfare/protection and vocational training in order to provide non-formal education support in literacy and life skills.