

Japan



Executive Summary

Civil Society Spotlight Report on the SDG 4 Implementation Status in Japan

COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES



TOTAL POPULATION:	112,620,000 as of 1 May 2019 (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)
POPULATION AGED 14 YEARS AND YOUNGER:	16.429 million (12.88%) (UNESCO, 2017)
GNI PER CAPITA:	US\$ 38,520 (World Bank, 2017)
INCOME GROUP:	High Income Status (World Bank, 2018)
HDI VALUE AND RANK:	0.909, 19 out of 189 (UNDP, 2017)
OUT OF SCHOOL:	118,248 children- 50,982 female and 67,266 male (UNESCO, 2016) 4,487 adolescents (UNESCO, 2016)
EDUCATION EXPENDITURE:	2.9% of the GNP and 8.0% of the total government expenditure. Funding education is a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the local government.

Government Rollout and Implementation of the SDGs and SDG 4

The Government of Japan (GoJ) formed the Sustainable Development Goals Promotion Headquarters (SDGs HQ) at the Prime Minister’s Office. The head of the HQ is the Prime Minister, while all the ministers are its members. The SDGs HQ announced the “SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles”¹ in December 2016, which identifies the priority areas and the list of specific measures with indicators. The Prime Minister’s Office has also announced the annual “SDGs Action Plan” in 2018 and 2019 based on the Guiding Principles. However, most of the measures shown in these policy documents are a set of existing measures of respective ministries without additional resources. Both domestic and overseas measures described in the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles to achieve SDG 4 are shown in the table. (see table)

CSOs’ Role in the SDG Implementation and Review Process

The Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs, or “SDGs Japan” has been formed to make advocacy efforts, of which Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE), a Japanese coalition of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), is an active member. The Prime Minister’s Office organised the SDGs Promotion Round Table Committee, an official policy dialogue mechanism of the government, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, and private actors. However, the policy dialogue with the Ministry of Education (MoE) on SDG 4 is limited. Policy-making processes, particularly on SDG 4.7, is not participatory and inclusive and lacks a bottom-up approach in which CSOs and schools working on SDG 4.7 can have a say.

SDGs Japan produced “A Report by Japanese Civil Society for UN HLPF 2017” on the occasion of VNR of Japan. It has also submitted the “Bottom-Up Action

¹ Available at <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000252819.pdf#search=%27SDG+guiding+principle%27>

Plan” to the SDGs Promotion Round Table Committee to influence the “SDGs Action Plan” of the government. JNNE has organised an annual campaign called the World Biggest Lesson in which 50,000 children and youth learn about SDG 4 and write lobby letters to the GoJ, which were submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). As part of the campaign, students give a lesson on SDG 4 and Japan’s role in education aid to members of parliament.

Reviewing Progress on SDG 4

The Government of Japan has driven progress towards achieving SDG 4, first, through the inclusion of learning about the SDGs in the new school curricula, which will be implemented from 2020. Second, the MoE started to support the capacity-building of personnel promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), including non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Third, integrated classrooms where students with disabilities are able to learn with students without disabilities are expanded to upper secondary education. Fourth, as an overseas measure, the GoJ committed to providing US\$200 million to support the education of girls and women in developing countries, and to enhance the support for humanitarian assistance, as well as for women’s empowerment in crisis.

Despite these signs of progress, critical gaps in the current SDG 4 policy remain. First, there are no policies and measures

cent share in all donors’ contributions to GPE. Finally, the programme to promote the Japanese-style education model to be implemented outside Japan is donor-driven. It ignores the ownership of governments and is not aligned with the national education policy.

Critical Education Issues

The education sector in Japan faces significant challenges with low government spending. Only 2.9 per cent of the GDP is allocated to education, the lowest among 34 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member states in spite of the higher actual cost of education from Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) to tertiary education which is US\$12,120 per person on average.² Considering that 14 per cent of the households with children in the country are living below the poverty line, the insufficient spending on education results in the following major problems. First, 52 per cent of the cost for ECCD is paid by households, which leads to lower participation rates. Only 23 per cent of children under 3 years of age receive ECCD, lower than the average of 31 per cent among OECD members. Second, 68 per cent of the cost of tertiary education is paid by households. A university student falls in debt of US\$32,710 on average at the time of graduation, which takes 15 years to return. Finally, the working conditions of teachers are poor, negatively affecting the quality of teaching and, in turn, student learning. The student-teacher ratio in primary education is 27, bigger than 21 of the OECD members’ average, and in lower secondary education, it is 32 which is much bigger than 23 of the OECD members’ average. The shortage of teachers leads to longer working hours, 1,883 hours a year, which is 200 hours more than the OECD members’ average.

Children and youth with foreign roots are considered the most marginalised group who are left behind and denied their right to education. The number of children in public primary and lower secondary schools who need Japanese language training is 44,000 in 2016.³ Thus, providing opportunities for home language education, as well as mother-tongue education, and supporting their basic Japanese language learning should be guaranteed. In addition, securing the legal status equivalent to formal schools for foreign schools in Japan, including Korean upper secondary schools, will be beneficial to foreign students. These schools should also be subject to the free tuition upper secondary school system.

Another ongoing challenge for Japan is the increase in the numbers of bullying cases and truant children in schools, reaching the highest record in 2017.⁴ In fact, 414,378 cases of bullying in public and private primary and lower secondary schools, as well as schools for students with disabilities, were reported, while the number of truant children in primary and lower secondary schools reached 144,031 in 2017 alone. It is



to address adult and youth literacy (SDG 4.6) in spite of the fact that a million migrant workers and more than a million adults who could not complete lower secondary school have difficulties with their functional Japanese language skills. An alternative learning system and robust research on the literacy rate in Japan are thus crucial to meet their communication needs and improve their literacy skills. Second, the indicators for SDG 4.7 are not relevant and clear since it does not employ the global indicator of SDG 4.7. Third, the percentage of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated for primary and secondary education is only 1.9 per cent, while other Development Assistance Committee (DAC) nations allocate 5.5 per cent of their aids to basic education. The amount of contribution of the Japanese government to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), a multilateral aid agencies for basic education, ranks 17th out of 22 nations, with only 0.53 per

² Education at a Glance 2018, OECD

³ Ministry of Education, 2016, Text in Japanese is available at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/29/06/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/06/21/1386753.pdf

⁴ Ministry of Education, 2018, Text in Japanese is available at http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2019/01/10/1412082-2901.pdf

also troubling to note that youth suicide in Japan is the worst among the G7 countries. This suggests that the right to education for all children is not guaranteed, and schools fail to provide safe, secure, and enabling environments for learning. The GoJ already has plans to address the rampant issues of bullying and truancy, but these are not included in the SDG Action Plan. Eliminating all cases of school bullying and school absenteeism will require the GoJ to prioritise these issues in the SDG Action Plan.

Recommendations

In conclusion, it is imperative that the Government of Japan take the necessary actions to ensure the delivery of inclusive and equitable quality education for all children, youth, and adults. We recommend three points. Firstly, the GoJ should increase the education budget to at least 4.2 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is the average among OECD member countries. Secondly, the GoJ should provide



■ Brazilian school in Japan

and allocate ample, consistent, and well-targeted resources to ensure the education rights of children, youth, and adults, especially migrant workers and those who could not complete lower secondary education. Finally, it is recommended that the GoJ address bullying cases in schools and support truant children. •

SPECIFIC MEASURES TO ACHIEVE SDG 4 DESCRIBED IN “SDGS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDING PRINCIPLES”

SDG 4 TARGETS	MEASURES	INDICATORS
DOMESTIC MEASURES		
4.1	Enhancement of elementary and secondary education Give support to children in completing elementary and secondary education to ensure equal opportunities in education. Revise and implement the national curriculum standards to provide children with a sufficient level of education throughout the country and help them foster competency required for the new era. Also to this end, improve the quality and abilities of teachers and enhance the allocation of teacher and other staffs.	(1) Upper secondary graduation rates (2) Decrease in the number of students positioned in the lower learning groups in international student assessment surveys (3) Increase of learning motivation and improvement of learning habits among students
4.2	Enhancement of early childhood education Early childhood education provides the foundation for the lifelong development of personality and it is therefore critical to provide all children with opportunities to receive high-quality early childhood education regardless of the economic situations of their households. Accordingly, work to step by step make early childhood education free of charge while also improving the quality.	(1) Percentage of children attending kindergarten and others (2) Percentage of children receiving free-of-charge childcare
4.3	Enhancement of higher education In light of the importance of developing highly skilled human resources at higher education institutions, provide highly motivated and talented students with opportunities to receive higher education by means of establishing a grant-type scholarship scheme and other economic assistance, while enhancing support to students in general and also providing people already working in society with second learning opportunities at universities, professional training college and others.	(1) Percentage of students who enter higher education institutions (2) Expansion of systems to allow students to receive education on a part-time basis at universities and systems to enable those already working in society to attend and complete courses of learning (3) Greater adult student enrollment in universities, junior colleges, and specialized training colleges. (4) Situation concerning applicants for and recipients of scholarships
4.4	Enhancement of career education and vocational education In addition to raising basic and general abilities that provide a foundation for social and vocational independence, we will prepare opportunities in which students can correspond to the mobilization of the labor market and gain practical and academic knowledge and skills throughout their lifetimes. In order to achieve this, enhancement of career education, improvement of internship projects, and collaboration between education and employment are required to avoid job mismatching.	(1) Improving student experiences in workplace and internship projects in secondary schools, universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and specialized training colleges, etc. (2) Greater adult student enrollment in universities, junior colleges, and specialized training colleges

4.5	<p>Promotion of education to meet special needs and provision of educational and learning opportunities to foster gender equality For the creation of an inclusive society, provide persons with disabilities with sufficient education according to their age, abilities and personal characteristics. To this end, improve and enhance the content and methods of education given to them. Also, for the creation of a gender equal society, foster gender equality at schools and in households and local communities, and increase educational and learning options.</p> <p>Provision of vocational training to persons with disabilities According to the third Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, provide persons with disabilities with vocational training that gives consideration to their disabilities at vocational ability development schools for disabled persons, and also provide them with a range of training according to their situations by making use of educational and training institutes in the private sector to which such training can be commissioned.</p>	<p>(1) Percentage of individual instruction plans and individual educational support plans created for children and students with disabilities at early childhood and elementary and secondary educational institutions (2) Number of students with disabilities attending higher education institutions</p> <p>(1) Employment rate of those who have completed courses at vocational ability development schools for disabled persons (2) Employment rate of those who have completed courses provided by private sector institutes on commission from the government</p>
4.7	<p>Promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and environmental education In line with the national implementation plan on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and , the act on the promotion of environmental conservation activities through environmental education, strengthen cooperation among multiple stakeholders which are involved in ESD and environmental education so as to provide suitable education to people at home, work place, region, school, and others in accordance with their development levels. In order to nurture children's competencies to be a creator of sustainable societies and the world, promote SDGs education through improving curriculum and revising teaching materials at school in accordance with the new national curriculum standards that will be implemented from April 2020.</p>	Steady implementation of ESD and environmental education
OVERSEAS MEASURES		
4	<p>Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth Based on the issue-specific policies set for educational support in September 2015, provide support to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 in developing countries based on the following policies: (1) education cooperation to achieve inclusive, equitable and quality learning; (2) education cooperation for industrial, science & technology human resource development and sustainable social economic development; and (3) establishment and expansion of both international and regional educational cooperation networks.</p>	<p>(1) Global indicator (4.1.1) Proportion of children and young people: (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex (2) Contribution in the educational field (development cooperation)</p>
4.1 4.2 4.3	<p>Dissemination of Japanese-style education using public-private collaboration platform Based on the EDU-Port Japan public-private collaboration platform, to achieve successful educational collaboration with international partners, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and other partners will hold international forums and pilot programs. Through these efforts, Japan intends to build stronger relations of trust and cooperation with those countries that Japan collaborates with, and furthermore, improve the education of both Japan and other countries.</p>	Number of cases in which the Japanese-style education model was implemented outside Japan in response to the needs of each foreign country (10 cases by the end of fiscal 2020)



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JNNE, Japan NGO Network for Education is a coalition of 20 Japanese NGOs working for education development in developing countries. Our mission is to contribute to achieving SDG4 through advocacy, campaigning, capacity building, research and networking. JNNE is a member of Global Campaign for Education (GCE).



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