

BANGLADESH

Secondary Education Sector Investment Program



Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in education. From 2005 to 2011, completion rates for grades 1–5 increased from 53% to 70%; gross enrollment in grades 6–10 increased from 46% to 61%, such that 11 million students are now enrolled in either general secondary schools or *madrasahs* (Islamic religious schools); gender parity in enrollment has been achieved up to grade 10; and the pass rate for the secondary school certificate (grade 10) rose from 53% to 82%, and for the higher secondary certificate (grade 12) from 59% to 75%.

Still, Bangladesh has a formidable task ahead in making secondary education more efficient, equitable, and relevant to the economy's needs. Only 46% of students complete all 5 years of secondary education. Girls drop out more than boys after grade 9. Secondary education graduates have difficulty finding jobs

relevant to their qualifications because they lack the cognitive and behavioral skills required by employers. The link between education and the labor market is weak. Access to high-quality education is inequitable, as no common quality standard applies across all types of schools. *Madrasahs* in particular lack qualified and capable teachers, adequate school infrastructure, and teaching equipment.

To address these challenges, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved the Secondary Education Sector Investment Program on 27 September 2013. The proposed investment program will support the government's reform of secondary education into a system that builds the foundation for a skilled labor force and prepares youths to meet the requirements of a rapidly developing economy.

PROJECT FEATURES

The project has three key features: A **long-term programmatic approach**, to help in the decentralization of education management; **use of disbursement-linked indicators** as incentives to achieve sector results, help improve public financial management, and strengthen awareness of good governance; and **transition to a sector-wide approach**, with all projects aligned with a common secondary education program framework by 2017.

The project has three expected outputs.

- Enhanced quality and relevance of secondary education.** Science, mathematics, and English teaching will improve and expand through the provision of teaching equipment, laboratories, tools, and teacher training. Laboratory-based practical science teaching, and school information hubs through which students and teachers will access information and communication technology (ICT)-based teaching and learning resources and modules will be piloted. Supplementary reading materials will be provided to school libraries. Reform of national examinations and classroom-based student assessment will continue.
- More equitable access and better retention.** A better-targeted, gender-equitable, and harmonized stipend program will be launched in 2016. Selected schools will be physically upgraded.
- Strengthened secondary education management and governance.** To decentralize education management, monthly payment order management will be devolved into zones. Secondary education quality standards will be refined, and the education information system will be strengthened to support improved monitoring and evaluation.

The program will support advanced teaching and learning programs that use ICT, as well as prevocational and vocational programs, teacher development, and examination reforms. It will promote gender-equitable

and pro-poor stipends for students and will help establish more decentralized and efficient allocation and use of resources, as well as strengthen sector performance monitoring.

The project is in line with the strategic directions of ADB's South Asia Department. The strategy focuses on sustainable infrastructure, climate change mitigation and adaptation, human development, regional cooperation and integration, public-private partnership, and good governance.



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Improved prevocational and vocational courses will be introduced in at least 100 secondary schools.

The investment program will directly benefit students from poor and disadvantaged families, *madrassahs*, and girls by improving their access to high-quality education

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Cost and financing: Asian Development Fund, \$90 million; Counterpart, \$1.6 billion, International Development Association, \$100 million; Korea International Cooperation Agency, \$3.5 million

Project approval date: 27 September 2013

Project themes: Social development, gender equity, capacity development

Status of project implementation: Ongoing
Executing agency: Ministry of Education

FOR INFORMATION

Human and Social Development Division, SARD
South Asia Department
Project Officer: Eisuke Tajima
etajima@adb.org

Link to South Asia Project Briefs:
<http://www.adb.org/publications/series/south-asia-project-briefs>

Sources: Project Data Sheet. <http://www.adb.org/projects/44213-015/main>; ADB. 2013. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan for the Secondary Education Sector Investment Program in the People's Republic of Bangladesh*. Manila. <http://www.adb.org/projects/documents/secondary-education-sector-investment-program-rtp>



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