

Asian Development Bank Equity Policy Template

Introduction

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established in 1966, with the purpose of fostering economic growth and cooperation in what was at the time one of the poorest regions in the world, Asia. From 31 members at its establishment, ADB has grown to 67 members today, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 from outside the region.

During its first decades, ADB focused much of its assistance on food production and rural development. As Asia moved beyond the economic crisis to emerge as a new engine of global growth, ADB concentrated eighty percent of its public sector lending on five operational areas: Education; Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management; Finance Sector Development; Regional Cooperation and Integration; and Private Sector participation. Those operational areas were selected as being critical to face the main development challenges in the Asia and Pacific region: Poverty Reduction, Economic Growth, Sustainable Growth, and Regional Integration.

Higher Education Policy Documents

Does the ADB have an official higher education strategy?

The ADB has produced two relevant documents that outline its strategy in education in general and in higher education in particular:

- **Education by 2020 A Sector Operations Plan:** the ADB will support the efforts of governments to increase the quality and supply of higher education, improve their capacity to implement policy in the subsector, and create a supportive regulatory environment for providers of higher education. Faced with the trend to establish centers of excellence, the ADB recommends reviewing the cost efficiency of such centers, which may exacerbate inequalities in postsecondary education.
- **Innovative Strategies in Higher Education for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia:**
 - Distance education, using online delivery to the extent possible, should be an essential part of any future strategies to expand higher education enrollments.

- The best way to address inequality of access to higher education is by intervening in basic and secondary education to ensure equality within the pipeline that leads to higher education.
- Targeted recruitment programs and the use of admission quotas can help to increase access among underrepresented groups in society.
- A mix of scholarships and income-contingent student loans is far more effective at increasing equity in university access than the provision of tuition-free public higher education.
- Developing a range of diversified higher education institutions, linked through a system of academic course credits recognized across the higher education system, supports cost-efficient access, student mobility, and lifelong learning, thereby maximizing education opportunities for students from all backgrounds.
- To increase the numbers of female academic staff, consider adopting policies that allow for part-time tenure and restarting the tenure track after an absence (e.g., childbirth).

Equity Policy Documents

What broad and specific equity objectives does the strategy document identify?

- Formulating and implementing inclusive strategies
- Expanding and improving second- and third-tier higher education institutions, including community colleges, to make a more effective contribution to developing knowledge and skills that are aligned with labor market requirements in an inclusive manner.

Is there a standalone equity promotion strategy for higher education?

- Access Without Equity? Finding a Better Balance in Higher Education in Asia (2012)

Which equity target groups are identified in the strategy document(s)?

- Low-income students
- Girls
- Students from rural and remote areas
- Ethnic and linguistic minorities
- Students with disabilities
- Refugees or migrants

What specific interventions and/or instruments of equity promotion are recommended to partner countries in the official strategy document (monetary and non-monetary interventions)?

Monetary Policy Instruments

What are the main financial instruments to promote equity?

- Needs-based scholarships and stipends
- Student loans

Non-Monetary Policy Instruments

What are the main non-monetary instruments to promote equity?

- Distance education
- Institutional diversification
- Specialized institutions targeting underrepresented groups (girls colleges)
- Regional universities for students in remote areas

Equity Interventions

What modalities and instruments does your agency rely on to promote equity in higher education in partner countries?

- Grants
- Loans
- Free technical assistance

Financial Resources

What financial resources does your agency devote to equity promotion programs/projects in higher education?

- Not available

References

Education by 2020 A Sector Operations Plan (2010)

<https://www.adb.org/documents/education-2020-sector-operations-plan>

Innovative Strategies in Higher Education for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia (2014)

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/41320/innovative-strategies-higher-education.pdf>

Access Without Equity? Finding a Better Balance in Higher Education in Asia (2012)

<https://www.adb.org/publications/access-without-equity-finding-better-balance-higher-education-asia>