

**RESULTS International (Australia)**

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**Girls, children with disabilities missing out on overseas education funding**

Major aid organisations have a long way to go in ensuring girls and children with disabilities get equal access to education in the Asia Pacific, according to a new report by aid advocacy group, RESULTS International Australia

The report analysed educational aid programs delivered by AusAID, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and The Philippines.

It found while some progress has been made in improving girls' access to education, children with disabilities suffered profound discrimination.

"Access to education has improved for girls in Indonesia and The Philippines, but for children with a disability, the situation is dire," RESULTS National Manager, Maree Nutt said.

"As Australian children prepare to go back to school today, we should all spare a thought for the hundreds of thousands of marginalised children in our region who lack access to the basic opportunities we take for granted.

"Education is the most powerful tool at our disposal for fighting poverty. It's especially important that we put that tool in the hands of girls and children with a disability."

The RESULTS report finds that AusAID and the Asian Development Bank are doing a reasonably good job of improving girls' access to education in Indonesia and The Philippines, though PNG remains a problem.

But it finds that The World Bank needs to improve its effort on gender, while all three agencies need a radical overhaul of how they approach access to education for children with disabilities.

With Australia set to spend \$5 billion on educational aid in the next five years, the report is timely, and includes recommendations for improving access to educational aid.

"There are some basic improvements that all of these agencies should make to ensure aid dollars penetrate the most marginalised pockets of population," Maree Nutt said.

"We need to establish clear targets for improved access to education among girls and people with a disability and make in-country officials responsible for meeting those targets.

"We also need equity targets built into budgets, so that access ramps, for example, are built in new schools.

"Finally, the Australian Government needs to be more strident in international forums and insist that organisations like the World Bank make stamping out gender and disability discrimination a top order priority."

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