

Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Education

**Country Report:
Myanmar Education Development Strategy
Focusing on Inclusive Education**

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Country Report

Myanmar Education Development Strategy Focusing on Inclusive Education

1. Introduction

1.1. Country Profile

With a land area of 677,000 square kilometers, Myanmar is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia. If child population is defined as those aged 0-14, Myanmar stands at No.4 among Southeast Asian countries. Myanmar's estimated 55 million people – about 38 percent of whom are younger than 18 – live in a changing family and social environment that both offers opportunities and presents challenges. Two-thirds of the labour force remains engaged in agriculture, while services are focused on small-scale enterprises and manufacturing is concentrated on State-owned enterprises.

The population of the country has been growing at an annual estimated average of 2.02 percent between 1998 and 2003; a total of 27.540 million or 49.71 percent is male, and 27.856 million, or 50.29 percent is female. In Myanmar's administrative areas – seven States and seven Divisions – live a mosaic of up to over 100 ethnic nationalities. The largest group is the *Bamar*, comprising about 68.95 percent of the population.

Since ancient times, people in Myanmar have enjoyed freedom of worship. Buddhism is practised by 89.4 percent of the population, Christianity by 4.9 percent, Islam by 3.9 percent, Hinduism by 0.5 percent and animism by 1.2 percent. Indeed, the largest civil society groups that influence social development in the country have a religious base; of these, the most numerous are Buddhist monks, of whom there are more than 490,000. Other faith-based groups are active in their representative communities.

The mean household size in Myanmar is 5, both in rural and urban areas. Overall, females head 18.4 percent of households, a percentage that has been increasing in recent years, especially in urban areas. National legislation guarantees women equal opportunity in employment, as well as equal pay for equal or similar work, and more women are working outside the home. Between 1973 and 2001, women's economic participation increased from 36 percent to 51 percent, and the proportion of the labour force that was female increased from 31 to 41 percent – a level similar to that elsewhere in the region. This does not, however, take into account women's significant contribution to their households, where women were more likely to be unpaid family workers.

Turning to the general level of education, 40.2 percent of the household population has primary education, 18.0 percent middle school education, 8.2 percent high school education and 4.2 percent university education; thus, about 58.2 percent (primary and lower secondary) of the household population has Basic Education. Because education has a direct relationship with productivity, investing in education is an important strategy for national development. Aspirations of building a modern developed nation are to be materialised through education, which forms the core element to systematic planning and management in various areas in all sectors.

1.2. Education Structure

The Myanmar Basic Education School system consists of five years of primary school (Grades 1 to 5), four years of lower secondary (middle) school (Grades 6 to 9) and two years of upper secondary (high) school education (Grades 10 and 11), totaling 11 years. Pre-school classes were introduced in 1998/99. In the EFA usage, Basic Education includes the primary and lower secondary levels. According to 2007/08 data, over 5 million students were enrolled in primary schools and over 2 million in lower secondary schools. If high school enrolment is included, about 7.9 million children are in Myanmar's basic education schools.

1.3. The Role of Education in the Context of National Development

Myanmar views education as a basic human need, an integral part of the quality of life, a support for moral and social values, and an instrument for economic productivity. The programmes initiated for education in Myanmar are ambitious and inclusive for students: developing a problem-solving and creative orientation toward institutions and social issues; promoting national unity and eliminating discrimination; learning to work cooperatively with others; and developing self-reliance. Recent education reforms have profoundly influenced the meaning and role of education and the development of the Myanmar education system.

The impact of globalisation, technological change, migration of labour and rate of accumulation of new knowledge all impose new demands on education in Myanmar. An effective, equitable system of formal and non-formal education promotes inter-group parity (rural-urban, male-female), develops shared appreciation, brings school and home closer together, and increases community-level sharing of decisions affecting youths. Emphasis on Basic Education allows the most vulnerable and priority target groups education and social access. In Myanmar as elsewhere, therefore, future development appears to hinge upon increased support for a broader foundation of human capital.

Demand for schooling also reflects changes in employment patterns. For example, the services sector increasingly requires not only knowledge of high technology, but also interpersonal skills and analytical capabilities. In terms of gender parity goals, economic growth has provided employment opportunities for women, thereby improving their ability to support their families.

The provision of schooling and policies determining how education opportunities are distributed across priority target groups in Myanmar clearly will have far-reaching effects on opportunities for productive work. The status and education level of women and girls can exert particularly strong inter-generational effects, and are thus crucial for reducing poverty. Myanmar has a strong record in this regard.

2. Education for All Initiatives in Myanmar

2.1. Development of Education in Myanmar since Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000)

In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All, sponsored by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, brought about the historic initiative and an international

commitment to a new and broader vision of basic education that emphasise greater access, equity and achievement in learning. Many countries could not achieve the targets.

Based on EFA assessment conducted in 1999, the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal adopted EFA Plan for all the countries to be implemented from year 2000 to 2015. In line with the long-term education development plan and based on the framework of Dakar EFA Goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Myanmar Education for All National Action Plan (EFA-NAP) 2003-2015 has been formulated.

The Myanmar EFA National Action Plan 2015 (EFA-NAP) is aimed at improvement of the education sector, especially access, quality and relevance, and management of the primary and lower secondary levels. It also aims to upgrade literacy and Life Skills for out-of-school adults and youths in order to directly support the social and economic development efforts of the nation.

2.2. EFA National Action Plan and 30-Year Long-Term Education Development Plan

Providing more opportunities for Basic Education for children, youth and adults is the keystone of the Myanmar Education for All National Action Plan 2003-2015. Prepared through a participatory process involving the United Nations System and international and national NGOs, in addition to staff from various Ministries, the NAP has been formulated incorporating the Dakar EFA Framework for Global Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Meanwhile, the 30-Year Long-Term Education Development Plan contains 10 programmes for the Basic Education sector to be implemented in six five-year medium-term plans. It is the most ambitious plan ever launched by MOE, with the motto of “Building a modern developed nation through education.” The Plan’s programmes include:

- ❖ Emergence of an education system for modernization and development
- ❖ Completion of basic education by all citizens
- ❖ Improvement of the quality of Basic Education
- ❖ Opportunity for pre-vocational and vocational education at all levels of basic education
- ❖ Providing facilities for e-education and ICT
- ❖ Producing all-round developed citizens
- ❖ Capacity building for educational management
- ❖ Broader participation of the community in education
- ❖ Expansion of non-formal education
- ❖ Development of educational research

Within the framework of the national education plans, particularly the Long-Term Education Development Plan, the EFA NAP aims to provide strategies to carry out development tasks for the effective organisational and management aspects of the school system, undertake research on education policy and aims, establish teacher education programmes and develop rural areas in conjunction with other national development tasks.

The six strategies to achieve these Goal areas by 2015 are:

- ❖ Developing and expanding Child Friendly Schools
- ❖ Making Basic Education more accessible to children
- ❖ Increasing retention and completion rates in schools
- ❖ Assisting children to develop to their fullest potential
- ❖ Enhancing literacy and Continuing Education through Non-Formal Education
- ❖ Modernising the Education Management Information System

2.3. Statement of EFA Goal

The second goal of the Global Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, on 26-28 April 2000, is **“Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to nationalities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.”** To achieve all the global EFA Goals, Myanmar has organised an EFA Forum in May 2002 and adopted six national goals for EFA under the EFA National Action Plan (2003-2015).

The EFA-NAP has been drawn up within the framework of the 30-Year Long-Term Education Development Plan and is in line with global EFA goals and the education-related goals of the Millennium Declaration and the World Fit for Children. The first goal of the Myanmar EFA is **“Ensuring that significant progress is achieved so that all school-age children have access to and complete free and compulsory Basic Education of good quality by 2015.”**

3. Inclusive Education: A Global Commitment

3.1. Inclusive Education: background, concept and the definition

The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) set the goal of Education for All. UNESCO, along with other UN agencies, and a number of international and national non-governmental organisations, has been working towards achieving this goal - adding to the efforts made at the country level.

Inclusive education as an approach seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and was restated at the Dakar World Education Forum (2000).

Inclusive education means that

“... schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.” (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3) **“Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.”** (Salamanca Statement, Art. 2)

Inclusion is seen as a **process** of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (Booth, 1996). It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 1994).

Despite encouraging developments there are still an estimated 113 million primary school age children not attending school (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000). Of those who do enrol in primary school, large numbers drop out before completing their primary education.

The urgency to address the needs of learners who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion through responsive educational opportunities was also pointed out in the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000:

“The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. **Education for All ... must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs...**” (Expanded commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, para 19)

Inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Rather than being a marginal theme on how some learners can be integrated in the mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment, rather than a problem.

4. Inclusive Education; A National Commitment

4.1. Background

One of the major achievements of the plan is the significant increase of primary enrolment rate having a net primary intake rate of 98.01 % in 2007-08 academic year compared to 92.1% in 2001-2002 academic year and also having a net primary enrolment rate of 83.8% in 2007-08 academic year compared to 78.0% in 2001-2002 academic year. But there are still a large number of children who are not yet attending schools. This is also an issue for every country in the world. So every country tries to find out who these children are, where they are and what can we do for them to have access to education. They are children from excluded groups and not yet included in the formal education stream. In this respect, the term **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION** came into existence. An education conference on Inclusive Education was held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 and the conference adopted the Salamanca Statement for excluded groups of children to get into formal schools for their studies. Based on the Salamanca Statement, Myanmar is now trying for the inclusion of these excluded groups such as:

- ❖ physically and intellectually challenged children,
- ❖ children belonging to ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities,

- ❖ children living in poverty/ slums, street children
- ❖ child victims of trafficking, drug addiction and children in correction centres, children affected by HIV, etc.
- ❖ children with special needs

4.2. Inclusive Education: Constant Process to ensure Education for All

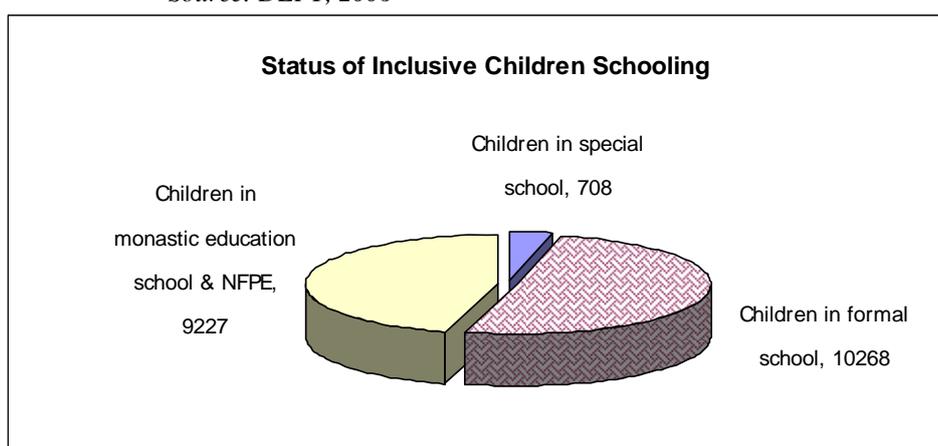
As noted, the progress is being achieved on the attainment of EFA goal with respect to access to primary education. However, in order to accelerate further progress, the provision of inclusive education in the formal system is also being encouraged. With the aim of further ensuring that all school going-aged children are in schools. The remaining out-of-school children who are in difficult circumstances, because of poverty, disabilities, (blind, deaf, mentally retarded, physically handicapped), migrated, health (HIV), problem children may be still left. Thus, Inclusive Education is right of all those children who may need to provide an opportunity for education.

Increased implementation of the EFA-NAP opens access to and opportunities for education, as well as offering quality education for all students. It also provides opportunities for children who need special care and attention to have access to Basic Education. Inclusive Education is an education programme that creates opportunities for children with disabilities and other disadvantaged children to pursue education together with non-disadvantaged children at formal schools. This is the national commitment of Myanmar for achieving EFA goals. The number of children in Inclusive Education is shown below..

Children in Inclusive Education Programme, Ages 5-15 (2005)

Type	Number
Children with disabilities in Special Schools	708
Children with disabilities in Formal Schools	10,268
Disadvantaged Children in Monastic Schools	9227

Source: DEPT, 2006



As a result of the measures taken to make basic education more accessible to all children, including disabled children with mild to moderate degree of special needs are enrolled in formal schools. Moreover some disabled children, graduated from primary schools of special education join the ordinary middle and high schools. So, the number of children with special learning needs has been increased in formal schools.

The community support for education and efforts of well-wishers and teachers toward the school children are recorded in order to upgrade social living standard of the local people who has false beliefs. Myayadanar, self-reliant primary school, which was founded in 1993 and good conditions of school children become well-known as No.25 Basic Education Primary School. Children from socially outcast families attending at Myayadanar Primary School is the witness of Ministry of Education in implementing Inclusive Education.

The Department of Myanmar Education Research Bureau has produced sample lessons for the blind and the deaf students in audio and video formats. This programme will continue till the necessary modules for high school level are completed. Myanmar has completed translating the Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environment (ILFE Toolkit) and already distributed for trainers and trainees in Education Colleges and for schools in project Townships and NGOs and GOs. MOE has published and distributed Inclusive Education related materials and the booklet "That All Flowers May Bloom" are published for awareness raising.

Series of workshops on the expansion of inclusive education are being conducted. The workshops emphasize the activities in four areas: data collection and awareness raising, development of inclusive education content for teachers and training, teaching aids and methodologies for teachers to become efficient teachers who could teach for achieving better results and establishment of a centre for inclusive education to learn and have more practice on self-reliance for their life.

4.3. Current activities undertaken for IE

1. Organizing national and regional workshops
2. Discussing IE concepts and plan at National Education Seminars, states/divisions, townships and schools in May 2005
3. Collecting data and providing assistance for the children who need special care
4. Producing teaching/learning materials for the disabled students (MOE/MOSW) (*DMERB: Audio Books, Video Lessons with Sign Language*)
5. Developing IE related materials and distributing among GOs, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations
6. Implementing IE related programmes : School Enrolment Week Programme, Special Programme for Over-aged Children to complete primary level in two/three years, All School Going-Age Children in School Programme, Pre-school Education under MOE, Post-Primary School Programme, which adds middle-level classes to primary schools, Opening More Schools in Remote, Border and Mountainous Areas, Monastic Schools., Mobile Schools, especially in remote areas, Education for HIV/AIDS-Infected and -Affected Children, Voluntary Night Schools, Orphanage Homes (Pa-ra-hi-ta Homes)
7. Providing special arrangements for disabled students while sitting for their final examinations
8. Planning to open Centre for Inclusive Education in Yangon and expanding to other cities
9. Mobilizing community for the realization of the plan
10. Introducing IE in education colleges
11. Initiation for the standardization of sign language for the deaf and Braille for the blinds (DSW/JICA)

4.4. Description of EFA Goal and Specific National Targets related to IE

Universalization of Basic Education (UBE) is not compulsory education, but it provides access to Basic Education (primary Grades 1-5, lower secondary Grades 6-9 and upper secondary Grades 10-11) for all children aged 5 to 15 in Myanmar. Thus, it brings Basic Education within the reach of all children in the school going-age group. In Myanmar, priority is to be given to poor children; children from remote, border and mountainous areas; children with disabilities; children from mobile families and orphans. Unreached children in Myanmar can be located through birth registration, hospital and school records, as well as through community sources. Girls are given the same opportunities as boys.

4.5. Inclusive Education as a Strategy to Achieve the EFA Goals

For Universalization of Basic Education, the following three strategies adopted in EFA NAP are;

Strategy 1: Developing and Expanding Child Friendly Schools

Child Friendly Schools (CFSs), being the EFA flagship, are being established by UNICEF to address holistic approach to education. Child friendly schools promote the following key dimensions to ensure equity and quality at the school level:

Inclusive & Child Seeking - Schools and communities identify the children who are not in school and try to enroll them by providing support to the child & family.

Child-Centred Learning - Training the teachers in interactive and child-centred methodologies to make learning an enjoyable and meaningful experience for children.

Gender Responsive - Promoting gender sensitive teaching to bring out the ultimate potential of both girls and boys.

Parent-Community Participation - Training of Parent-Teacher Associations for more involvement in school management,

Conducive Learning Environment - Support to improvement of the physical school infrastructure including water and sanitation facilities.

Strategy 2: Making Basic Education More Accessible to Children

Access to education is not a one-time arrangement. Non-Formal Primary Education and Non-Formal Middle School Education for out-of-school children will be an immediate solution. Regarding access to education, particularly for the priority target groups, the activities have been identified under this strategy measures are being taken to achieve the tasks. Regarding programmes for access to and quality of Basic Education, the following activities have been implemented:

- ❖ School Enrolment Week Programme
- ❖ All School Going-Age Children in School Programme
- ❖ Pre-school Education under MOE

- ❖ Special Programme for Over-Aged Children in Primary Classes, with accelerated curriculum
- ❖ Post-Primary School Programme, which adds middle-level classes to primary schools
- ❖ Inclusive Education
- ❖ Opening More Schools in Remote, Border and Mountainous Areas
- ❖ Monastic Schools
- ❖ Mobile Schools, especially in remote areas
- ❖ Education for HIV/AIDS-Infected and -Affected Children
- ❖ Voluntary Night Schools
- ❖ Orphanage Homes (Pa-ra-hi-ta Homes)

Strategy 3: Increasing Retention and Completion Rates in Schools

The present retention and completion rates indicate that in many areas, barely 60 percent of children complete the full five-year primary cycle. Schooling expenses that are unaffordable for poor or large families are probably the major reason for dropping out of school.

Many schools, especially in remote areas, do not have enough teachers, another factor to lowered retention and completion rates, especially among priority target groups. Although on average there is one teacher per 30 students, many primary schools operate without enough teachers assigned to them throughout the school year. In addition, it is generally believed that, at the initial stage, children will find it difficult to learn in another language at schools. Language difficulties are perhaps contributing to increased school dropouts, especially among various national groups. MOE has suggested that when hiring teachers, priority should be given to local recruits.

Meanwhile, in this age of knowledge, e-education has become a necessity; MOE is overseeing the provision of e-facilities in urban schools and some rural schools. Equitable development must be ensured when equipping schools, in phases, with facilities for ICT multimedia classrooms, Internet access and resource centres. Support programmes also are essential to assure retention and completion of schoolchildren, at least in the primary cycle. The following activities have been identified under this strategy:

- ❖ Provide free textbooks and stationery to primary pupils
- ❖ Support poor pupils in primary schools with basic requirements
- ❖ Organise motivational activities using IEC materials
- ❖ Find creative ways of teaching-learning for nationalities groups
- ❖ Ensure each school has an adequate number of trained teachers throughout the school year
- ❖ Practise flexible teaching learning programmes for maximum participation eg. multigrade teaching
- ❖ Expand ICT and e-education facilities in basic education schools

4.6. Implementation of Inclusive Education Related Programmes

Increased implementation of the EFA-NAP opens access to and opportunities for education, as well as offering quality education for all students. Schools can take a number of alternative or community forms, especially in very remote areas. These include branch schools, essentially part of a main school but located closer to the homes of children who live some distance away; and affiliated schools, which are linked with a nearby State schools through which their students sit for examinations. In order to meet the local demand for education, local communities in remote, low-income rural areas are encouraged to build and run schools on their own initiation and expense, with the promise that the schools will be gradually converted into branch schools. School fees are the main source of income at these schools. Whereas branch schools are supported and supervised by MOE, affiliated schools are established by the community and pay salaries of teachers through the community.

Self-help schools, meanwhile, are established and managed completely by communities but often do not cover the full primary cycle. Usually not recognized by MOE, these are typically located in the most remote areas. Here the community may construct a new school or rent a building, as well as furnish, operate and manage the school and hire a teacher, paying the salary from fees from the students' families.

Following regional and national awareness workshops, MOE opened a Centre for Inclusive Education and launched Inclusive Education in the first phase. Myanmar has completed translating the Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environment (ILFE Toolkit) and distributed it to trainers and trainees in Education Colleges, as well as schools in project townships, NGOs and GOs.



ILFE Toolkit in Myanmar Language

IE related books and TV programmes have been published and developed for dissemination of IE messages:-

- **Books**

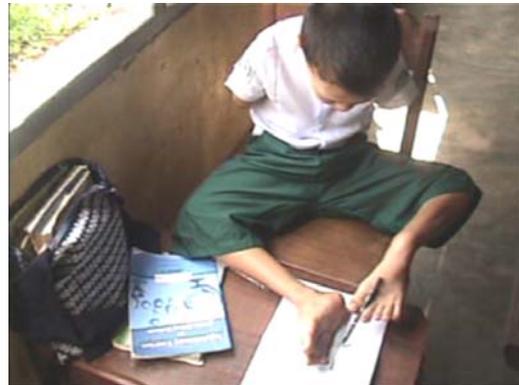
- That all flowers may bloom Volume 1(Myanmar and English)
- That all flowers may bloom Volume 2(Myanmar and English)
- Inclusive Education for Sustainable Development (Myanmar)

- Special Education for Mentally Retarded (Myanmar Translation)
- **TV programmes**
 - Education talk on Inclusive Education
 - Education Breaks Through the Darkness
 - Strength of Life (May Zin Aung)
 - Never Give up (Su Pon Chit)
 - Warmly Welcome from a Thriving Garden

The following programmes are being undertaken for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education:

- **Providing opportunity for the children with disabilities**

Myanmar has traditionally provided access to education to mentally and physically disabled children. There are master's degree holders who are blind and doctorate degree holders who are physically handicapped and there are many such students enrolled in various grades of basic education schools. The Department of Myanmar Education Research Bureau (DMERB) has produced sample lessons for blind and deaf students in audio and video formats respectively. More samples are to be produced, up to high school level. In addition, MOE is planning to distribute Braille equipment to all blind students.



As of now there are 12 institutions specially opened for blind and deaf children. One hundred and ninety-six children are now in formal schools. They are getting special care and attention from the teachers and also the assistance from their peers. The blind can follow the lessons by using special devices such as Braille. The deaf children are learning in the classrooms following the sign language used by their teachers. The teachers are learning sign language to be able to use it to teach their disabled pupils.





These children are now enjoying their study in schools with the help of teachers and compassionate peer learners. This has been a normal practice in Myanmar.



One good example is that of Ma Su Pon Chit, a 15 year-old disabled girl student of B.E.H.S, Hlaing Tharyar who has been awarded the **Student of the Decade** for excellent academic achievement and high performances in educational activities. Due to Ma Su Pon Chit's devotion to her studies, she passed the matriculation examination with four distinctions in July 2004. She is now In Western Yangon Technological University as a first-year B.Tech; student.

Basically, there are seven schools for the blind, two schools for the deaf, one school for the disabled children and two vocational training schools for the adult disabled and six training schools for boys and two training schools for girls under DSW, collaborate effort with the NGOs such as Marry Chapin, Eden, Schools for the blind in Kyimyindine, Mandalay etc.

- **Mobile Schools**

Many children in Myanmar also have to accompany their parents as they move from one place to another to earn a living. Mobile schools, with mobile teachers, have been opened as an effective means for promoting access to Basic Education for these children, through the cooperative efforts of educational and administrative personnel and the community. These schools are recognised and supervised by Township Education Offices.

Number of Mobile Schools, Students and Teachers (2006/07)

States/Divisions	Townships	Localities	Students	Teachers
5	16	47	1,883	69

Source: DEPT, 2007

Children from the mobile school learn the same curriculum, in the same duration, as if they were in the formal education system. Teachers may be from the formal schools or hired by the parents or community; thus, in some cases teachers may go along with the children when their parents migrate.



A Student from Mobile School, Long-lon Township:

I am very pleased to learn. When I told my friends that I am studying a b c, my friends asked me who taught me.

I proudly answered "My teachers". I will try to learn like them to be able to recite, write and read. Thanks to our teachers.

*Maung Nyi Nyi,
Longlon Township*

- **Opening More Schools in Remote, Border and Mountainous Areas**

Equal access to primary education for remote, border and mountainous areas is another important and prominent task. This is undertaken by the Ministry of Education in close cooperation with the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs. The Border Area Development Association (BDA) was formed in 1996 to raise the living standard of indigenous races. Since then, BDA has actively promoted education, health, agriculture and income-generating programmes. Table shows the number of schools and students in remote and border areas under these special schools.

**Number of Schools and Students in Remote and Border Areas
(2001/02-2005/06)**

Academic Year	Schools				Students			
	High	Middle	Primary	Total	High	Middle	Primary	Total
2001-2002	33	59	586	678	3992	23084	55018	82094
2005-2006	91	90	853	1034	12704	52461	105755	170920
Increase	58	31	267	356	8712	29377	50737	88826

Source: DEPT, 2005

In 2005/06 the pupil-teacher ratio of border area schools was 41.8:1 for primary level, 28.4:1 for middle level and 14.13:1 for high school level. By opening more schools in border areas, education in these areas is being developed and access to primary education promoted for more children.

- **Monastic Schools**

Monastic schools remain an important source of education, especially for children from poor families and children without primary caregivers. Monasteries run about 1,000 primary schools and 120 middle schools that are registered with the Department of Religious Affairs, serving about 160,000 students. Monastic schools that follow the official primary curriculum under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs cater to children in townships where access to public primary schools is difficult. Some children in monastic schools receive free lodging, textbooks and stationery.

Number of Schools and Students in Monastic Schools (2001/02-2005/06)

Academic Year	Schools				Students			
	High	Middle	Primary	Total	High	Middle	Primary	Total
2001-2002	-	120	908	1028	-	14279	131565	145844
2005-2006	2	115	1174	1291	3437	20880	160432	184749
Increase	2	-5	266	263	3437	6601	28867	38905

Source: Dept. of Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, 2006

- **Education for HIV/AIDS-Infected and -Affected Children**

With the help and encouragement of the community and social organisations, HIV/AIDS- infected and affected children are accepted without discrimination in basic education schools and monastic schools.

NGOs are not only providing education to Children Living With AIDS (CLWA) but also to children of HIV infected parents. One of the social organizations that is giving support to this particular target group is an international NGO, namely, Association of Francois Xavier Bagnoud (AFXB).

AFXB provides various means of education support for children who are in vulnerable situations, especially children of HIV infected parents. During the academic year of 2006, a total of 42 HIV infected (27 male and 15 female) and 108 HIV affected children (53 male and 55 female) received formal schooling support and psycho-social life skill lessons in Yangon. In Mawlamyine, 21 HIV infected and 36 HIV affected children received formal schooling support and psycho-social life skill lessons. About 150 street and working children come regularly to AFXB centre every Saturday and Sunday. They received non-formal education and psycho-social life skill lessons during three hours of their regular meeting. UNICEF Myanmar, the co-partner of AFXB, provided education assistance such as schooling entrance fees, uniforms, stationery and schooling bags for 80 children in Yangon and Mawlamyine. Apart from that, children received the monthly education assistance which resulted in the awareness of the value of education as an investment by the parents. Hence, the HIV infected or affected children had an opportunity to continue with the formal education like other children. The learning status and the monthly education progress report of the children at the government school was followed by the AFXB staff members.

Psycho-social life skill education is essential for children to develop their reasoning power and to enhance their critical thinking. Lessons on health education and social relationship are helpful, especially to children in a vulnerable situation. Studies have revealed that formal education i.e. lessons from the government schooling system combined with psycho-social life skill education are equally important for children to enhance the development perceptively. The above issues should be considered as an important approach as toolkits in education at child-centres in order to attain the optimum achievement.

- **Voluntary Night Schools**

Voluntary night schools have been opened in states and divisions for out-of-school children and youths by the Myanmar Women Affairs Federation (MWAFF) and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA). In 2006, the number of students who attended such schools run by MWAFF was 12,535, while the number of such schools run by MMCWA was 66; the number of students who attended such schools, both primary and secondary, was about 8,000. Moreover, voluntary night schools (primary) have been opened by communities; these schools are recognised by DSW. In 2006/07 the number of such schools is 87, while the number of students is more than 6,066 and teachers total 270. The MWAFF and MMCWA also support poor and outstanding students at different levels of education by giving stipends, outstanding awards, stationery and uniforms.

- **Orphanage Homes (Pa-ra-hi-ta Homes)**

For more than 50 years, orphanage homes have been opened by social and faith-based organizations and well-wishers to take care of orphans and children from poverty-stricken families in Myanmar. These centres are registered at DSW, which to some extent supports them with regard to costs of clothing, food and home-in-charge honoraria. In 2005/06, 68 centres served 14,830 children.

- **School Enrolment Week Programme**

A groundbreaking endeavour of the Basic Education sub-sector has been initiation of the School Enrolment Week programme on a national scale to accelerate the achievement of universalisation of primary education. Since 1999/2000 the last week of May has been delineated as Enrolment Week, under which a Whole Township Enrolment Day is observed in every township.

This mass movement mobilizes parents to send their children to school and makes arrangements for the provision of classrooms, furniture and teaching aids to the schools involved. It also harnesses the resources of communities to support needy children with school uniforms, textbooks, stationery and stipends. The mass media, including television, radio and newspapers, are used to mobilise public participation in the programme. As a result of such efforts, Grade 1 intake rose from 91 percent in 1999/2000 to 97.58 percent in 2005/06. Moreover, given the current rate of progress in primary education net enrolment and retention rates, Myanmar should achieve universal primary education, by 2015. The total amount of contributions for Enrolment Week in 2004/05 was nearly 670 million kyats,

including nearly 550 million kyats from communities and 120 million kyats from MOE.

- **All School Going-Age Children in School Programme**

The All School Going-Age Children in School Programme was implemented beginning in 2002/03 with the objective of enrolling all primary school going-age children in school and continuing schooling up to the completion of primary education. The four main functions of the programme were: (i) formulating the Whole Township School Enrolment Plan; (ii) supervising absences and dropouts in schools; (iii) supporting out-of-school children and those who have difficulty with schooling and consulting with parents; and (iv) supervising that all children re-attend school except those who already have completed primary education. Local authorities, educational personnel, departmental personnel, social organisations, PTAs, SBTs, well-wishers, parents and communities took part in the implementation. By 2005, the programme was to be extended to include all townships, as shown below.

All School Going-Age Children in School Programme (2002/03 - 2005/06)

Department	Number of Townships by AY				
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	Total
DBE(1)	23	25	25	25	98
DBE(2)	23	52	52	55	182
DBE(3)	9	12	12	12	45
Total	55	89	89	92	325

Source: DEPT, 2006

- **Pre-School Education under MOE**

MSW is the focal institution for ECCD and for opening of pre-schools. The MOE in 1998 extended pre-school classes in schools. The increase in number of pre-schools from 2000-01 through 2005-06 is shown below: Pre-school education has been highlighted since 1998 so that 3+ age children would have access to pre-school education and to make children be school friendly or be ready for school.

Number of Schools Having Pre-primary Classes and Children under MOE (2000/01-2005/06)

Year	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Schools	354	512	667	785	905	1,311
Children	9,560	12,860	15,679	18,223	19,077	24,685

Source: DEPT, 2006

- **Special Programme for Over-Aged Children in Primary Classes**

With the aims of further ensuring that all school going-age children were in schools, a special programme for over-age children is being implemented in 2003-

2004 AY at basic education schools. The accelerated programme enables children of age 7+ or 8+ to complete primary education in 3 years and those of age 9+ to complete primary education in 2 years. Learning through the special curriculum, these over-aged children were able to attend lower secondary school after their primary education. In 2005/06, this programme served more than 103,000 children.

- **Post-Primary School Programme**

In many areas, particularly remote and border areas, children who finished primary education had no opportunity to continue with their studies because there were no lower secondary schools in the area. In 2001/02, existing primary schools in such regions had Grade 6 added to their classes so that graduating children could attend the school; the following year Grade 7 was added, and so on. The number of students in post-primary schools has soared from fewer than 32,000 in 2001/02 to more than 334,000 in 2005/06, while the number of schools also has expanded dramatically, from 696 in 2001/02 to 5,545 in 2005/06. This has contributed to the increase in transition rate from primary to lower secondary level from 67.9 percent in 2001/02 to 78.3 percent in 2005/06.

Number of Post-Primary Schools and Students (2001/02-2005/06)

Year	2001/02	2005/06	Increase
Number of Schools	696	5,545	4,849
Number of Students	31,881	334,090	302,209

Source: DEPT, 2005

- **Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) Programme**

A noteworthy innovation is the NFPE Programme, a two-year NFE programme that is equivalent to formal primary education in terms of relevant knowledge and skills. The NFPE Programme is being provided for out-of-school children aged 10-14 who never enrolled or who dropped out, as a second chance for education. In 1998, DMERB developed NFPE materials under MOE/UNDP/UNESCO project. NFPE students attend classes for 2 hours each day, six days a week. (a)NFPE Level I is equivalent to Grade 3, and (b) NFPE Level II is equivalent to Grade 5 of formal education.

Subjects taught at NFPE Levels I and II are Myanmar, English, Mathematics and General Studies. The quality of learning is assessed against formal school standards; NFPE completed children can enroll in secondary school.

In particular, NFPE programs are now being implemented in some townships under the No (1) Basic Education Departments. There are (73) centers in (18) townships with the enrolments of (1629) children.

VOICES FROM CLCS - Myanmar

MY NAME IS MA KAYTHI. I LIVE IN NYAUNG NYIN BIN VILLAGE.
I AM NOW ATTENDING AN EVENING CLASS OF NON – FORMAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (NFPE) .



The activities of ensuring that school-going age children should go to school, were carried out in May in our village. But I cannot go to school. Because my mother passed away last year. I have to cook and look after my brothers and sisters. I was very sad and cried when I saw my neighbouring friends going to school. One night, the village leader came to our house and told my father that I could attend an evening class of NFPE. He said that the NFPE evening class would open on 21st August. I was very happy to hear that news. Today is the first day of our class. I would like to thank my teacher and all of you who make the class possible. I feel joyful for being able to attend this class.



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LITERACY BREAKTHROUGHS NO. 5

Ma Kay Thi, who lives in Nyaung Nyin Bin Village is a student of the evening classes of NFPE. Because that children attending NFPE evening classes are more mature and can learn more quickly, this programme allows for accelerated learning and mainstreaming back into formal schools upon successful completion of the NFPE course.

The current Extended and Continuous Education and Learning for out-of-school children (EXCEL) program also represent a good example for addressing this need.

- **Education Provided in the Prisons**

The young children who have to be taken along with their mothers serving prisons terms are being taught in prisons. It is arranged by the Prisons Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

4.7. Strategies imposed for IE

4.7.1. Proposed IE Related Recommendations

For the successful implementation of the IE programmes MOE in collaboration and coordination with concern partners EFA Task Force propose the following recommendations.

Common recommendations

Explore innovative methods not only to provide education for children affected and infected by HIV and who are still in vulnerable situation (in unreached areas) but also to ensure their overall well-being by the Government, NGOs and Community Based Organizations.

- **Recommendations related to Inclusive Education**

1. Enhance awareness of communities for the existence of non-schooling children, their responsibility to provide access to education for those children and mobilize resources to help such children

2. Formulate policies and programme for priority target groups, including children from very poor families; children in remote, border and mountainous areas; children with disabilities; children from mobile families; and orphans
3. Make primary and secondary education more accessible to children and increase retention and completion rates by
 - offering incentives to priority target groups to motivate enrolment in school
 - distributing free text books and other essential teaching-learning materials to ease financial constraints among poor families
 - Enhancing more infrastructure development to achieve quality learning environment
4. Allocate equitable resources for children and schools in remote and hard to reach areas.
5. Deploy sufficient numbers of qualified teachers and strengthen their capacity
6. Recruit local teachers to work in their locality
7. Strengthen the cooperation of GOs and NGOs in supporting hard to reach children including children with disabilities
8. Expand the existing special programme for the over-aged children
9. Strengthen EMIS database system through regular data collection system to have better EFA network for planning, implementation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation

5. Review of the IE activities and the Future Plan

❖ Strengths and Weaknesses of IE

• Strengths

1. Policy directives and detail instructions from MOE
2. By Myanmar custom and tradition, the community, parents and teachers are taking actions with their good will, sympathy and kindness.
3. Closer cooperation and collaboration among MOE, MOH and MSWRR

• Weaknesses

1. Need to raise awareness and IE concept and share information among education workers, parents and community
2. Insufficient trained teachers
3. Insufficient teaching learning materials
4. Limited numbers of special schools
5. Need to recruit experienced teachers to give more attention to the children in need of special care

❖ Future Plan

1. Produce more teaching learning materials for disabled children
2. Organize workshops at various levels for awareness raising, advocacy and implementation
3. Share experiences to related ministries, departments, organizations and international agencies

4. Produce more IE related materials to get awareness
5. Utilize media and organizing talks on IE awareness raising
6. Organize fund raising for IE
7. Provide more opportunity for the implementation of IE
8. Establish networking mechanism among GOs, INGOs, NGOs and local authorities
9. Strengthen data collection for IE through EMIS to have better EFA network data for planning, implementation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation

❖ Proposed strategies and activities to be implemented in future

Strategy # 1: *Expand the concept of Child-Friendly Schools*

Activities:

1. Scale up the CFS project
2. Enhance the existing monitoring and evaluation system
3. Provide adequate supplies for quality assurance
4. Conduct baseline survey for the progress of new project townships
5. Extend CFS concept up to lower secondary schools

Strategy # 2 : *Increased Access to Basic Education*

Activities:

1. Implement the strategy to achieve the set target of medium term plan of the Long Term Basic Education development plan
2. Expand learning opportunities for the un-reached groups
3. Ensure increased enrollment through "*Enrollment Week*", "*Post-primary School Project* and "*Mobile Schools Program*" "*Special Program for Over-aged Children*" "*Non-formal Primary Education Program.*" and opening of schools in border areas
4. Strengthen and expand monastic education for poor children
5. Expand food for education program
6. Encourage schools to realize the concept of inclusive education

Strategy # 3 : *Increased Retention and Completion Rates in Schools*

Activities:

1. Monitor and supervise the activities of school retention project
2. Take motivational activities using IEC materials to promote retention and completion of basic education
3. Find ways for creative teaching/learning methods for ethnic national groups
4. Ensure that every school has adequate number of trained teacher throughout the school year
5. Practice flexible learning programs for maximum participation (eg: multigrade teaching)
6. Continue to equip Basic Education Schools with ICT, e-education, etc,
7. Adopt appropriate rules and regulations for universal basic education

6. Conclusion

Finally, Myanmar has demonstrated its commitment to education through establishing the right to education for every child, both constitutionally and through legislation. As a signatory to the Global Education for All Declaration (Dakar, April 2000), Myanmar formulated a national Education for All National Action Plan (EFA NAP) in 2003, that outlines the educational developments the country requires until 2015.

In line with the Salamanca Statement (1994) and reinforcement of IE in the Global EFA plan (2004), MOE is making special arrangements for the disabled and other excluded children to attend formal schools and to continue their education receiving special care and attention. In Myanmar, the IE programs were formulated to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. These programs include all vulnerable children such as disabled and gifted children, children from mobile families, orphans, street children, children from remote/ border areas and disadvantaged children.

Inclusive Education should embrace all excluded children who need to be taken care and given special attention to them. Schools or learning centres are the best entry points for grouping children with different background to learn together and to find unity in diversity. Child Friendly Schools act as an approach to inclusiveness. It is a flag-ship project which is to act as a catalyst to ensure that the right to education and the goals of EFA are realized for excluded children. Regardless of the body and mind, either weak or strong, human being can be nurtured to develop a strong mentality. It is transferred into the hands of the teachers to let all children grow. It is “Holistic”. A small learning circle is good enough to generalize and globalize as a model in reality.