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Principles and general objectives of education

Education is viewed 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 social objectives for education in Myanmar are ambitious and include 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. The stated aim of the government's educational policy is to create an education system that can generate a learning society capable of facing the challenges of the knowledge age. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

National authorities have identified sixteen political, economic and social objectives as the basis on which all policy decisions should be made. The four national social objectives are: uplift of the morale and morality of the nation; uplift of national prestige, integrity, preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character; uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit; and uplift of health, fitness and educational standards of the nation. The main educational goals are to:

- enable every individual to acquire basic education;
- base education on the rising of moral standards;
- develop the knowledge, including scientific and technical know-how, needed for nation building;
- train technicians, skilled workers and proficient intellectuals with practical knowledge who are loyal to the State and will contribute to nation-building endeavours;
- train the citizens so that they will achieve all-round development;
- allow all those who possess the intellectual ability, caliber and industriousness to acquire university education.

According to the Basic Education Law (1973), the main objectives of basic education are to:

- enable every citizen of the Union of Myanmar to become a physical or mental worker well equipped with a basic education, good health and moral character;
- lay the foundations for vocational education for the benefit of the Union of Myanmar;
- give priority to the teaching of science capable of strengthening and developing the productive forces;
- give priority to the teaching of arts capable of preserving and developing the culture, fine arts and literature of the State;
- lay a firm and sound educational foundation base for the pursuance of university education.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Basic Education Law** was promulgated in 1973 and amended in 1989. The **University Education Law** was enacted in 1973 and amended in 1998. The **Technical, Agricultural and Vocational Education Law** was promulgated in 1974 and amended in 1989.

The **Child Law** was enacted in July 1993 in order to implement the rights of the child recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 20 states that: (a) every child shall: have the opportunity of acquiring education; have the right to acquire free basic education (primary level) at state schools; and (b) the Ministry of Education shall: have the objective of implementing the system of free and compulsory primary education; lay down and carry out measures as may be necessary for regular attendance in schools and the reduction of untimely drop-out rates; make arrangements for children who are unable for various reasons to attend State schools, to become literate. Article 21 stipulates that every child shall have the right to maintain his or her own cherished language, literature and culture, to profess his or her own religion and to follow his or her own traditions and customs. According to article 22, every child shall have the right of access to literature contributing to his or her all-round development and to acquire knowledge. Article 18 stipulates that a mentally or physically disabled child: (a) has the right to acquire basic education (primary level) or vocational education at the special schools established by the Social Welfare Department or by a voluntary social worker or by a non-governmental organization; and (b) has the right to obtain special care and assistance from the State.

In principle compulsory schooling covers the first five years of basic education (grades 1 to 5). According to Article 152 of the **Constitution** of 1974, every citizen shall have the right to education and shall be given basic education which the State prescribes by law as compulsory. Article 366 of the Constitution of 2008 stipulates that every citizen, in accordance with the educational policy of the Union, (a) has the right to education; (b) shall be given basic education which the Union prescribes by law as compulsory; and (c) have the right to conduct scientific research explore science, work with creativity and write to develop the arts and conduct research freely other branches of culture.

Administration and management of the education system

According to the 2008 Constitution, administratively Myanmar is divided into 21 sub-divisions, including seven States (Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan), seven Regions (formerly referred to as 'Divisions': Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, Tanintharyi and Yangon), six self-administered zones, and one self-administered division. Sub-divisions are further divided into districts which include townships, wards (organized as town or township) and village-tracts (groups of villages). The vast majority of people live in the central divisions-regions, as opposed to the outlying states. There are more than 130 ethnic groups known as nationalities. Major groups are Bamar, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. According to the 1983 Census, Bamar accounted for 69% of the total population. The official language is Myanmar. Nationalities are being encouraged to promote their own languages within their societies. The use of local languages is also



encouraged in non-formal education (NFE) related programmes organized by the government, NGOs and international organizations. Some NFE booklets and pamphlets are published in local languages.

Educational policy is centralized at the level of the **Ministry of Education** in Yangon. The major Departments within the Ministry include: Basic Education I, II and III; Educational Planning and Training (which is primarily responsible for short- and long-term planning and training for primary and lower secondary teachers in the education colleges); Higher Education (Lower Myanmar); Higher Education (Upper Myanmar); **Myanmar Board of Examinations**; **Myanmar Education Research Bureau (MERB)**; and **Myanmar Language Commission**.

Implementation of the basic education policy is split between two departmental offices under the Ministry of Education (MOE), one in Mandalay (for Upper Myanmar) and one in Yangon (for Lower Myanmar). A third office is in charge of Yangon City schools. These three departmental offices and the Department of Educational Planning and Training administer and manage basic education in accordance with the directives of the **Basic Education Council**, which includes the **Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee** and the **Teacher Education Supervisory Committee**. Implementation costs for Education for All (EFA) activities are borne by MOE and other ministries responsible for education, including **Religious Affairs** (monastic schools), Social Welfare, and the **Ministry of Progress for Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs (MPBND)**. The MPBND has a separate budget for providing education in specific border regions in education, health, agriculture, livestock, transport and communications, and social affairs. Traditionally, a strong community contribution to education also exists, with communities providing support for school construction, maintenance and facilities, as well as accommodation for teachers in certain areas.

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and **School Board of Trustees (SBTs)** play a major role in financing education. All government schools are required to have a PTA comprised of the school head, selected teachers and parents elected by the majority of parents in the community. PTAs are the regular provider of funds for public schools, as the annual PTA fees are levied on enrolled pupils. Voluntary contributions by individuals and funds raised through events are other sources of income for schools. After 1998, SBTs were introduced in schools. The advent of SBTs has somewhat relaxed the burden on PTAs to raise funds for the construction of new buildings and facilities, school maintenance, accommodation for teachers, annual prize distributions and meetings, as well as for extracurricular activities such as sports events, arts exhibitions, and essay writing competitions.

As regards the decision-making process at the Ministry of Education level, a special coordination committee (e.g. the Executive Committee) is formed with the Directors General and Chairmen of the departments as members, in addition to the Minister and two Deputy Ministers. The decisions of the Committee are implemented by those responsible at various departmental levels.

The MOE also supervises higher education, although at least other 12 ministries are running post-secondary and tertiary-level educational institutions. Higher education academic and administrative policy matters are managed by two



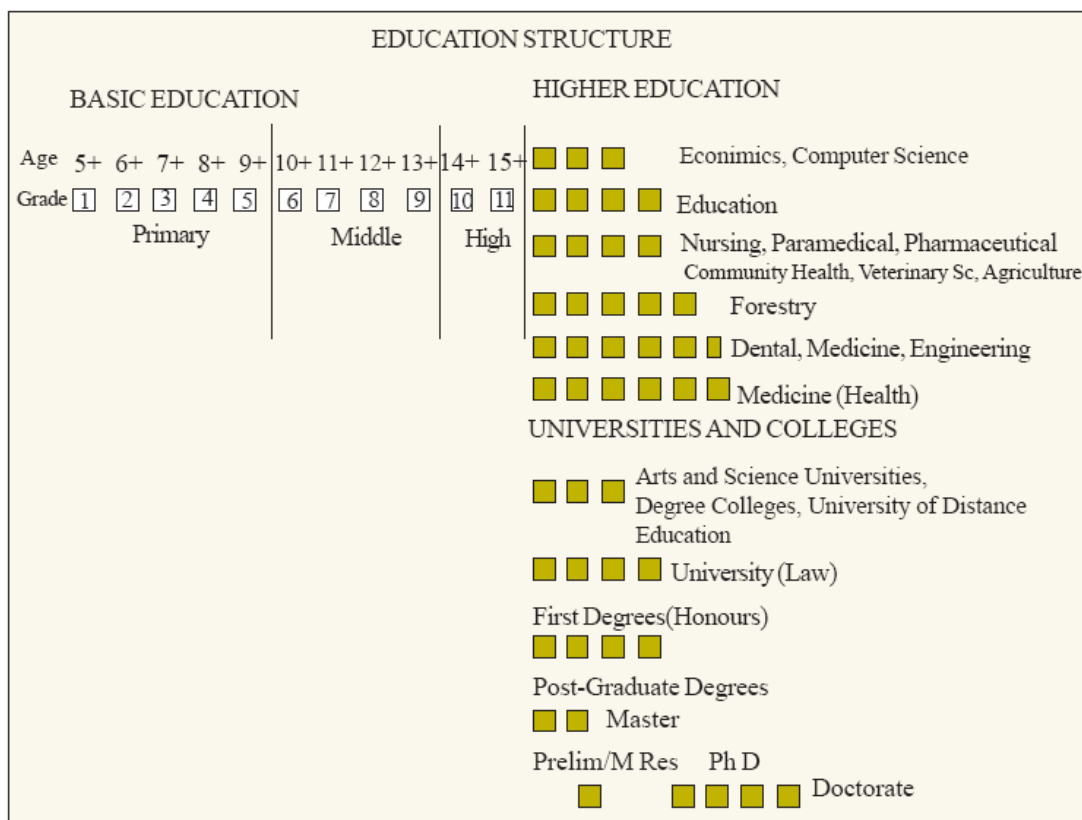
councils chaired by the Minister for Education. The **Universities Central Council** is responsible for broad policy and coordination of the work of higher education institutions, while the **Council of Universities Academic Bodies** is responsible for the adoption of academic regulations and the coordination of academic work.

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) and special education are under the authority of the Department of Social Welfare, under the **Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement**. There are also primary schools offering preschool education under the Ministry of Education. Public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is undertaken mainly by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education, **Ministry of Science and Technology**, within a policy framework laid down by the Technical and Vocational Education Council.

The **Myanmar Naing-Ngan Education Committee** was established in 1991 with a view to establishing an education system compatible with the political, economic and social context, help uphold Myanmar's cultural traits and contribute to the development of the country. The main functions of the Committee are to: advise the government in enacting educational laws which will support the perpetuation of the physical integrity of the Union, national solidarity and national sovereignty; advise the government in adopting educational policies in line with the social, economical and political system; give guidance in implementing programmes aiming at promoting the intellectual and technical advancement of the people of Myanmar; advise the government in reviewing and amending educational programmes, if necessary; and give guidance in the cooperation with international development agencies and educational organizations for the implementation of programmes in the education sector.

Structure and organization of the education system

Myanmar: structure of the education system (2007)



Source: Ministry of Education, 2007.

Pre-school education

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is defined as nurturing children under 5 years of age physically, socially, mentally and spiritually; it refers to both preschool programmes (age group 3-5 years) and diverse child rearing practices and daycare programmes for children younger than 3 years. ECCE programmes include centre-, community-, home- and family-based “mother circles” and parenting education, as well as integrated ECCE activities. Attendance is not compulsory.

Primary education

Primary education is the first stage of basic education and, in principle, is compulsory. Primary education lasts five years, including the reception year (kindergarten or grade 1); it is organized in two cycles: lower (grades 1 to 3), and upper primary (grades 4 and 5). The admission age is 5+, although many children entering grade 1 are over 6 years of age. At the end of primary education, pupils sit an examination.



Secondary education

Secondary education is the second stage of basic education and comprises two cycles: lower secondary or middle school lasting four years (grades 6–9), and upper secondary or high school (grades 10 and 11). At the end of lower secondary education, pupils sit the Basic Education Middle School Examination. The basic education programme culminates in the Basic Education High School Examination (matriculation). Technical and vocational education is offered in agricultural institutes and high schools, technical high schools, vocational and trade schools.

Higher education

Tertiary-level and university education is for those students who have completed basic education and have passed the entrance examination. Tertiary-level institutions include universities, technical institutes and colleges under the supervision of several ministries (mainly Education, Health, and Science and Technology). Upper secondary (high) school leavers can join technical institutes for two-year courses leading to the award of the Associateship of Government Technical Institute (AGTI, associate degree); technological colleges and universities offer two-year programmes leading to the AGTI, four-year programmes leading to the Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech), and five-year programmes leading to the Bachelor of Engineering. Tertiary-level institutions also offer a wide range of short training courses lasting three to nine months leading to a certificate. At the university level, bachelor's degree courses normally require three years to complete (four years in the case of law, six year in the case of the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery); a bachelor's honours degree is awarded after an additional year of study. A postgraduate diploma requires one or two additional years to complete, while programmes leading to the master's degree usually last two years. Programmes leading to the award of a doctoral degree require at least four years of study and research.

The school year at the basic education level consists of thirty-six working weeks and is divided into two semesters. At the university level the standard academic calendar consists of two semesters. Each semester normally includes 14 weeks of instruction and two weeks of examinations.

The educational process

The revised primary school curriculum was introduced in 1998 to respond to the need for children to have a more balanced curriculum, rather than emphasizing only academic subjects. School heads and teachers have an important task in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum implementation and its impact on children's development. According to the curriculum revision of 1998, life skills, natural science, moral and civics in the lower primary level, along with social studies and basic science in the upper primary level, have been introduced as core subjects. This has kept up with and is more reflective of the rapidly changing society largely brought about by globalization.

Likewise, the new assessment programme introduced at the same time emphasizes Comprehensive Personal Record (CPR) and chapter-end tests to avoid the burden of final examinations, making education more conducive to the all-around quality aspects of students. 'Life skills' was made mandatory for inclusion at the primary level as a separate core curriculum in 1998 and at secondary level as separate co-curriculum in 2001. The age-appropriate life skills curriculum covers areas of personal health and hygiene; nutrition; physical growth and development; reproductive health; mental health; preventable diseases and alcohol and substance use/abuse; and environmental health and sanitation. Social skills such as decision making, communication skills, interpersonal relationships, empathy, critical and creative thinking, coping with emotion and stress and fostering self-esteem and self-expression have been incorporated into lessons. Contents, teaching-learning methods and hours have been carefully specified for lower primary, upper primary and secondary school curricula. Life skills aims to develop knowledge, attitude and skills that enable children to use psycho-social competencies and interpersonal skills for making informal decisions, effectively communicating and developing safe behaviours.

Vocational subjects such as industrial arts, agriculture, home economics, and fine arts were introduced at lower secondary level, aiming at comprehensive development of the student. A teacher training course dealing with these subjects was conducted for primary and lower secondary level. The subject morals and civics now includes human rights education, which was introduced in 2004/05 at the lower secondary level and in grade 10.

Pre-primary education

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) and preschool education are under the authority of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. As mentioned ECCE is defined as nurturing children younger than 5 years physically, socially, mentally and spiritually, and refers to both preschool programmes (age group 3-5 years) and diverse child rearing practices and daycare programmes for children younger than 3 years. All children younger than 5 years are the target group, but priority is given to the most vulnerable groups: poor children; children from remote, border and mountainous areas; children with disabilities; children from mobile families; and orphans. Types of ECCE programmes



include centre-, community-, home- and family-based “mother circles” and parenting education, as well as integrated ECCE activities. Within the EFA National Action Plan (NAP) 2003-2015, major actions in the area of ECCE include: creation of a policy framework and advocacy for ECCE; raising awareness in ECCE effectively through information, education and communication; expanding home- and family-based ECCE, including “mother circles” and providing technical services, including parenting education; supporting the establishment of quality ECCE centres by providing training and helping to coordinate funding and material support; creating an ECCE database and multi-sector network with active support of partners; and providing increased budget to government departments involved in development of pre-primary education and ECCE services.

Registration procedures for pre-primary schools and daycare centres were developed in 2004, reviewed in 2006 and therefore submitted to higher authorities. In 2006 the Department of Education Planning and Training (DEPT), in collaboration with UNICEF, conducted monitoring and evaluation assessments of ECCE performance and impact in 13 out of 61 Area Focus Townships in which programmes have been based since 2001. In order to assess the performance of ECCE programmes in its preschools, DSW also carried out a field study of 30 preschools in Yangon in 2006. Other impact assessments have been conducted by Save the Children.

The approach to ECCE is holistic and child-centred. Rather than concentrating on reading and writing, which may be poorly suited for very young children, more centres are giving children opportunities for the type of play that promotes physical, social and cognitive development. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, in cooperation with relevant ministries and departments, UNICEF, and NGOs, has developed a curriculum for preschools and daycare centres, along with a teachers’ manual and guidelines for caring for children under 3 years of age. These guidelines were reviewed in 2006 and approved in 2007. Preschool centres cater to children aged between 3 and 5 years. Generally, in these centres children are placed in groups according to their age, i.e. 3/4-year-olds and 4/5-year-olds. Attention is given to the following aspects: physical development of the children; development of basic language skills; acquisition of basic numerical skills; cultivation of good conduct and ability to show respect to elders; formation of habits for self-discipline; development of spirit of self-reliance and love of work; development of group and collective work habits; cultivation of sense of responsibility; development of creative ability; development of love of one’s natural environment and people. In ECCE, inconsistencies in curricula still exist and standardization of the curriculum among stakeholders is required for quality assurance. At the same time, a shortage of trained teachers is still observed in community-based ECCE and preschool classes attached to basic education schools. The minimum qualification for becoming a preschool teacher is grade 9 passed (completed middle school), but border areas are an exception.

The process of smooth transfer from preschool and home to primary school is critical for most children and their families. In addition, it is particularly challenging for the estimated 30% of Myanmar’s children whose mother language is not Myanmar. The EFA NAP recommends that specific methodologies designed to deal with the introduction of young children to the Myanmar language be developed. To address this issue, a special transition curriculum has been designed and piloted in selected primary schools. The transition curriculum, developed by ECCE technical



personnel, trainers, curriculum development committee for primary level, teacher educators from education colleges among others, is being introduced through active participatory methods in the first eight weeks of primary schools on the basis of the existing curriculum. In preschools, according to the ECCE learning method, pre-primary children learn their own language as a first language, then the official language (Myanmar). About 2,300 bilingual preschools have been established.

A key ECCE strategy in reaching the priority target groups and reducing rural-urban gaps has been the innovative development of “mother circles,” which represent a hybrid model whereby pre-primary school-based early childhood centres serve as the nucleus of support to home-based satellite programmes. Mother circles (MC) were initiated in 2000 in five disadvantaged peri-urban townships in Yangon under the Network Project through DEPT, in collaboration with Pyinnya Tazaung and UNICEF. By 2004, 960 MCs were introduced and 9,600 children under 3 years of age were attended; 1,408 MCs were implemented by 2006 and served more than 14,000 children. Timetables are more flexible in the MCs, depending on the most convenient time for the mothers and the leaders. Most are opened for three hours, five days a week year-round and include a nutritious meal, small snack and vitamin supplement. As in pre-primary classes, children also are de-wormed every 6 months and weighed monthly. Each MC is supplied with basic cooking and eating utensils and some play materials; some support groups also have helped by making toys. Besides the MC leaders, there are three MC facilitators for every 10 MCs. They support the leaders by helping with the logistics, bringing the children to the MC, and giving parenting education.

In 2006/07, a total of 1,773 schools under the Ministry of Education (MOE) had pre-primary classes with 36,595 children enrolled. Community-based pre-primary schools and daycare centres also have been opened by DEPT, DSW and NGOs; in 2007, a total of 1,656 community-based preschools were operating, attending more than 62,400 children. Parenting education has been carried out in villages and wards through discussion programmes on parent care, malaria prevention, HIV and AIDS education and childcare for young children under age 5. NGOs also participate in the implementation of ECCE programmes and as of 2006 had established 2,800 preschools serving more than 100,000 children and some 1,400 “mother circles” serving more than 14,000 children below 3 years of age. These facilities provide help to children who cannot attend the government preschools and to parents for income generation, parenting education, awareness raising and child health care and nutrition assistance. DSW also provides assistance to orphans, abandoned children and poor children younger than 5 years in six residential nurseries in Yangon, Mandalay, Kyinetone, Magwe and Mawlamyine.

Increasing numbers of teachers, school heads and caregivers are being trained in basic and advanced ECCE courses, including training designed to address the special target groups of children with disabilities and orphans. Between 2004 and 2006, a total of 265 courses attended by 8,951 participants were offered by DEPT; DSW, including the Social Welfare Training School and State and Division Social Welfare Offices; the Myanmar Education Research Bureau; and NGOs. Even so, among teachers working at preschools run by the government and NGOs, the overall proportion of trained teachers was found to be 56.2% in 2006.



According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of 2003, based on data from states and divisions, ECCE enrolment already stood at 16.9%, thereby surpassing the EFA target before 2005. Education Management Information System (EMIS) data showed that the number of children in preschool education increased from 142,438 children in 2004 to 256,357 in 2006, not including out-of-centre programmes. According to EMIS data, 128,901 out of 1,205,257 new grade 1 entrants in 2006 had ECCE experience, representing 10.7% of new entrants. In 2004, a total of 967 preschools were operated by the government and 3,483 centres by NGOs and private organizations; by 2006, those figures had nearly doubled, with the government operating 1,876 preschools and NGOs and private organizations operating 5,652 preschools. Among states and divisions, Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Bago (West) and Mandalay Divisions had the high number of pre-primary schools. Out of the 256,357 children attending preschools in 2006, a total of 127,170 children (or 49.6%), were girls. A 2006 monitoring and evaluation report showed that DSW preschools average a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 15:1. Class size averages 30 children, although up to 35 children are allowed in exceptional circumstances. DSW appoints two teachers for one class. Following DSW's 2006 assessment of 30 Yangon preschools, voluntary preschools recognized by the Department are monitored by Divisional Social Welfare Offices to ensure they follow DSW regulations. Enrolment rates vary from a high of 32% in Kachin to less than 3% in Kayin. At the same time, participation rates for children of the wealthiest families stand at nearly five times those of the most disadvantaged families, according to MICS data. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Primary education

Primary education is the first stage of basic education and, in principle, is compulsory. Primary education is organized in two cycles: lower (kindergarten/grade 1 to 3), and upper primary (grades 4 and 5).

As mentioned, in accordance with the Basic Education Law (1973) the main objectives of basic education are to:

- enable every citizen of the Union of Myanmar to become a physical or mental worker well equipped with a basic education, good health and moral character;
- lay the foundations for vocational education for the benefit of the Union of Myanmar;
- give priority to the teaching of science capable of strengthening and developing the productive forces;
- give priority to the teaching of arts capable of preserving and developing the culture, fine arts and literature of the State;
- lay a firm and sound educational foundation base for the pursuance of university education.

Concerning the primary education curriculum, Myanmar language, English and mathematics are the core subjects. At the lower primary level, general studies include both social and nature studies. At the upper level, basic science and social studies (including geography, history, moral and civics, and life skills) were introduced in the 1998/99 school year.

The primary education weekly lesson timetable (end of the 1990s) is shown in the table below:

Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly teaching periods in each grade				
	Lower primary			Upper primary	
	Kinder.	Std. I	Std. II	Std. III	Std. IV
Myanmar language	11	11	11	8	8
English language	4	4	4	6	6
Mathematics	7	7	7	7	7
General studies	9	9	9	–	–
Basic science	–	–	–	4	4
Social studies	–	–	–	8	8
Aesthetic education	3	3	3	3	3
Physical education	4	4	4	3	3
Activities in school	2	2	2	1	1
Total weekly periods	40	40	40	40	40

Each teaching period lasts 30 minutes at the lower primary and 35 minutes at the upper primary level.

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 government school through which their pupils 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 school will be gradually converted into a branch school. School fees are the main source of income at these schools. Whereas branch schools are supported and supervised by the Ministry of Education (MOE), affiliated schools are established by the community which also pays teachers' salaries. Self-help schools 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. 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 using fees from the students' families. The Seven Township Survey of 2003 showed that 55% of primary schools, 42% of lower secondary (middle) schools and 44% percent of upper secondary (high) schools needed to be improved in some aspects, especially school in rural areas.

Monastic schools play an important role in terms of access to education, especially for children from poor families and children without primary caregivers. In 2005/06 monasteries run 1,291 primary and middle schools registered with the Department of Religious Affairs, with a total of 184,749 students including 160,432 pupils in 1,174 primary schools. Monastic schools offer free education, often including room and board. They have proven excellent sources for local language instruction. 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.



Child Friendly Schools (CFSs) being the EFA flagship are being established with the support of UNICEF. CFSs have a holistic approach and promote the following key dimensions to ensure equity and quality: inclusive and child seeking; child-centred learning; gender responsive; parent-community participation; and conducive learning environment. Through the CFSs the role of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) also has been expanded to include increased participation in school affairs and management and in children's learning. Since 2001, more than 42,000 PTAs members have participated in training on the CFS approach, its concepts and methodologies, and ways PTAs can become more involved with schools and their children's education.

Equal access to primary education for remote, border and mountainous areas is another important and prominent task. This is undertaken by the MOE 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 peoples. Since then, BDA has actively promoted education, health, agriculture and income-generating programmes. In 2005/06, in remote and border areas there were 170,920 students enrolled in 1,034 schools (including 853 primary schools with 105,755 pupils enrolled).

Inclusive education is a programme that creates opportunities for children with disabilities and other disadvantaged children to pursue education together with non-disadvantaged children in mainstream schools. In 2005, there were 708 children with disabilities in special schools, 10,268 in mainstream schools, and 9,227 disadvantaged children in monastic schools.

In 1999, the average number of pupils per class was 40 and the average teacher-pupil ratio was 1:31 in rural areas and 1:26.5 in urban areas. The average dropout rate was 9% and the average repetition rate was 9.7%. However, many studies suggest that schools in rural and outlying regions of the country are overcrowded and understaffed, with a higher teacher/pupil ratio in the critical lower grades. Nationally, less than 60% of teachers were certified to teach in 1996/97, although this situation has improved a lot. Official data for 1995/96 showed that the repetition rate was highest in the kindergarten year (18%), declining to 5% in grade 5 (Ministry of Education, May 1999). The MOE has abolished the kindergarten (grade 1) end-of-year examination and modified the curriculum. Preliminary data for the 1997/98 school year showed a reduction of the repetition rate in the kindergarten year, estimated at 15%. Nationally, variations in the average repetition rate are apparent by urban/rural residence as well as by state/division.

Only two out of three children enter primary school and barely 60% of the children entering grade 1 eventually complete the primary school cycle. Reasons for not attending school include inaccessibility of school facilities, inability of parents to meet school expenses, or working obligations and/or caring of siblings. Insufficient resources have reduced the availability of teaching aids and textbooks, and have contributed to understaffed and overcrowded classrooms, thus affecting the quality of schooling. This implies a significant and increasing problem as far as school drop-outs are concerned, with the overwhelming majority being pupils in rural areas.



New assessment and evaluation procedures in place of end-of-term and end-of-year examinations at the basic education level are reducing the burden of study for examination purposes and aim at establishing a student-centred and learning-oriented classroom situation. Chapter-end tests are regularly conducted by class teachers so that remedial teaching can take place in time. No tests of any sort are now applied in the first two years of primary education, resulting in a reduction of early drop-outs. The new system emphasizes continuous assessment and record the progress of pupils, without judging their abilities only on the basis of examination results.

In the kindergarten year (grade 1) and grade 2, assessment is conducted through regular daily exercises. For promotion to a higher grade pupils must demonstrate proficiency in language and mathematics. Assignment cards, reading cards, test cards, etc., are used as a reinforcement in the assessment and evaluation process.

In grade 2, chapter-end tests are applied. Promotion of a student is not only based on the results of chapter-end tests but also on the marks obtained in the Comprehensive Personal Record (CPR) which records student participation in the activities listed. A pupil is eligible to be promoted if his/her average marks in academic subjects are equal to the set pass mark. The CPR for the primary level contains the following components: having 75% school attendance; sitting regularly the chapter-end tests; abiding by school rules and regulations and not indulging in social crimes; fulfilling obligations to school, teachers, parents and the community and taking care of younger pupils; growing trees, plants and making the school environ verdant and green; giving assistance in parent's livelihood; participating in sports and physical activities; participating in aesthetic education such as involvement in literary activities, music, singing, dancing and painting; keeping oneself neat and tidy.

The components are divided into six areas and each area is allocated marks, the total being 100 marks. Pupils are given a total mark of 100 for each subject in the chapter-end test to measure academic progress. To be promoted to the next level, pupils must obtain at least 40% in both academic and school activities.

In 2005/06, the total enrolment at the primary level was 4,918,951 pupils in government schools (under the MOE), 160,432 pupils in monastic schools, and 105,755 pupils in border areas schools. In 2005 the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 89.6% and the net enrolment ratio at 82.2% (83.8% in 2007/08). The survival rate to grade 5 was estimated at 71.5%, the overall dropout rate at 6.9%, and the transition rate from primary to middle school was estimated at 78.3% in 2005/06. Female teachers represented some 86% of all basic education teachers in 2005/06 (181,349 women and 29,356 men for a total of 210,705 teachers). The average pupil/teacher ratio was 30:1. While the average class size at primary levels is 34 pupils, disparities are large, with classes of up to 60 pupils reported in some rural schools. In addition, some of the primary schools are multigrade or "few teacher" schools, where a teacher is responsible for teaching two or three grades simultaneously. Although teacher training includes multigrade component, the practice application of multigrade teachings in schools needs to be reinforced. (Ministry of Education, 2007 and 2008).

According to the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, in 2006/07 there were 36,205 primary schools with 172,209 teachers and a total of 5,013,581 pupils enrolled.

Secondary education

Secondary education is the second stage of basic education and comprises two cycles: lower secondary or middle school lasting four years (grades 6–9), and upper secondary or high school covering grades 10 and 11. The weekly lesson timetable at the lower secondary level (end of the 1990s) is shown in the tables below:

Lower secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly teaching periods in each grade			
	Std. V	Std. VI	Std. VII	Std. VIII
Myanmar language	5	5	5	5
English language	6	6	6	6
Mathematics	8	8	8	8
Geography	4	4	4	4
History	4	4	4	4
General science	4	4	4	4
Moral education	1	1	1	1
Physical education	1	1	1	1
Aesthetic education	1	1	1	1
Participation in school activities	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	35	35	35	35

Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Lower secondary education: weekly lesson timetable (proposed plan starting from the 2001–2002 school year)

Subject	Number of weekly teaching periods in each grade			
	Std. V	Std. VI	Std. VII	Std. VIII
Myanmar language	5	5	5	5
English language	6	6	6	6
Mathematics	7	7	7	7
Social studies	6	6	6	6
General science	4	4	4	4
Life skills	1	1	1	1
Moral education	1	1	1	1
Vocational education	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Aesthetic education	1	1	1	1
Participation in school activities	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	35	35	35	35

Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.



Chapter-end tests are used to assess students' learning achievement and determine whether a student is eligible for promotion or not. In one school year seven to eight chapter-end tests can be organized. The results of both chapter-end tests for the first semester and the examination at the end of the second semester—Basic Education Middle School Examination—are taken into account for promotion to the upper cycle of secondary education. In the examination at the end of the second semester, a student has to answer one question paper for each subject.

The level of participation of the student in school and community activities is also taken into consideration. Assessment of the student's participation is carried out by a team consisting of the principal of the school, the class teacher and another teacher who is directly related to specific activities. Components of middle school and high school level Comprehensive Personal Record (CPR) include the following in addition to those set for the primary school level: participating in the development tasks of the local community and the State; offering voluntary service for community work; participating in the activities of teams, clubs and associations of the school and social activities such as the Red Cross, etc.

At the upper secondary level, there are compulsory and elective subjects. Myanmar language, English and mathematics are compulsory subjects, while physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history, economics and optional Myanmar are elective subjects. A student has to choose three subjects from the group of elective subjects. The weekly lesson timetable (end of the 1990s) is shown in the table below:

Upper secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly teaching periods in each grade	
	Standard IX	Standard X
Myanmar language	5	6
English	5	6
Mathematics	5	6
Physics	2	2
Chemistry	2	2
Biology	2	2
Geography	2	2
History	2	2
Economics	2	2
Optional Myanmar language	2	2

Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

A student can choose one of the combinations of subjects showed in the following table:

Subject combinations	
1.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, Economics, Physics and Chemistry
2.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, Geography, History and Economics
3.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, Geography, History and Optional Myanmar language
4.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, History, Economics, Optional Myanmar language
5.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, History, Physics and Chemistry
6.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, Optional Myanmar language, Physics and Chemistry
7.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology
8.	Myanmar language, English, Mathematics, Geography, Physics and Chemistry

Students in grade 11 have to participate in school activities and sit chapter-end tests in the first semester and the examination at the end of the second semester. The Basic Education High School Examination (matriculation) at the end of the second semester must be conducted at least three weeks before the university entrance examination. Students having successfully completed the high school are awarded the high school completion certificate. Students who passed the university entrance examination and are qualified for admission to universities and tertiary-level institutions, have to sit the entrance examination administered by these establishments.

Public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is undertaken mainly by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, within a policy framework laid down by the Technical and Vocational Education Council. Under the Council, a technical education committee



and a vocational education committee monitor activities in their respective fields. Training of technicians is undertaken in government technical institutes and the training of skilled workers or basic craftsmen in the technical high schools. The technical institutes and technical high schools also offer shorter courses as well as part-time evening courses for those already employed. There are also industrial trade schools and handicraft schools offering short courses in certain occupations. The system of TVET accreditation is at an early stage of development.

In 2005/06, the total enrolment was 1,966,653 students in middle schools and 632,841 students in high schools under the MOE; 20,880 students in middle and 3,437 students in high schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (monastic schools); and 52,461 students in middle and 12,704 students in high schools in border areas schools. At the lower secondary level the average students/teacher ratio was 33:1, the average dropout rate was 6.1%, and the transition rate from middle to high school was estimated at 93.3%. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

According to the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, in 2006/07 there were 2,160 middle schools with 59,434 teachers and a total of 2,047,796 students enrolled, as well as 1,085 high schools with 22,509 teachers and 638,402 students enrolled.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Information is not available.

Teaching staff

Until the 1997/98 academic year, there were five teacher-training colleges and 14 teacher-training schools under the Department of Educational Planning and Training. There were also two institutes of education, one under the Department of Higher Education and the other under the Civil Service Selection and Training Board. Teacher-training schools were responsible for the training of primary school teachers (one-year programme leading to the Certificate in Education), while teacher-training colleges were responsible for the training of lower secondary/middle school teachers (two-year programme leading to the Diploma in Education). Institutes of education were responsible for the training of upper secondary/high school teachers (three to four-year programmes leading to the bachelor of education degree).

Since June 1998, all existing institutions have been affiliated to the Institutes of Education as Education Colleges Level II (the former teacher-training schools) and Education Colleges Level I (the former teacher-training colleges). All Education Colleges Level II are being upgraded to Level I since 2004/05. Students having successfully completed the one-year programme at the Education College receive the Certificate in Education, and they can teach at the primary school level as Primary Assistant Teacher (PAT). After having completed one additional year, students receive the Diploma in Teacher Education which qualifies to teach at the lower secondary level; at least one year of experience in primary school is required to be promoted to the status of Junior Assistant Teacher (JAT). Those who possess a bachelor degree in fields other than education can enroll in the education competency



training course lasting one year, and will qualify to be PAT, or JAT if they comply with the field experience requirement. At the postgraduate level, the following programmes are offered: one-year postgraduate diploma in teaching (offered since 1999 by the Institute of Education, Yangon); two-year master's degree programmes; and doctoral degree programmes. Correspondence courses for in-service teachers are also offered. The structure of certificate and diploma programmes (end of the 1990s) is shown in the tables below:

Certificate in Education programme: timetable for the first semester (16 weeks)

Subject	Weekly periods	Total periods	Assigned credits
Educational theory	5	80	4(3-2)
Educational psychology	5	80	4(3-2)
Methodology:			
(a) Myanmar	4	64	3(2-2)
(b) English	4	64	3(3-2)
(c) Mathematics	4	64	3(3-2)
(d) Natural science and basic science	4	64	3(3-2)
(e) General studies and social studies	4	64	3(3-2)
Physical education and co-curricular subjects:			
(a) Physical education	7	112	1(1-6)
(b) Industrial arts/domestic science	2	32	1(1-1)
(c) Agriculture	2	32	1(1-1)
(d) Fine arts	2	32	1(1-1)
(e) Music	2	32	1(1-1)
Extra-curricular activities	5	80	
Total	50	800	28

Practicum session (block teaching + assessment) eight weeks, two credits.

Certificate in Education programme: timetable for the second semester (16 weeks)

Subject	Weekly periods	Total periods	Assigned credits
Academic subjects:	5	80	4 (3-2)
(a) Myanmar	5	80	4 (3-2)
(b) English	5	80	4 (3-2)
(c) Mathematics	5	80	4 (3-2)
(d) Physics/history	5	80	4 (3-2)
(e) Chemistry/geography	5	80	4 (3-2)
(f) Biology/economics	5	80	4 (3-2)
Physical education and co-curricular subjects:			
(a) Physical education	7	112	1(1-6)
(b) Industrial arts/domestic science	2	32	1(1-1)
(c) Agriculture	2	32	1(1-1)
(d) Fine arts	2	32	1(1-1)
(e) Music	2	32	1(1-1)
Extra-curricular activities	5	80	
Total	50	800	29



Diploma in Education programme: timetable for the first semester (16 weeks)

Subject	Weekly periods	Total periods	Assigned credits
Educational theory	5	80	4(3-2)
Educational psychology	5	80	4(3-2)
Methodology:			
(a) Myanmar	4	64	3(2-2)
(b) English	4	64	3(3-2)
(c) Mathematics	4	64	3(3-2)
(d) Natural science and basic science	4	64	3(3-2)
(e) General studies and social studies	4	64	3(3-2)
Physical education and co-curricular subjects:			
(a) Physical education	7	112	1(1-6)
(b) Industrial arts/domestic science	2	32	1(1-1)
(c) Agriculture	2	32	1(1-1)
(d) Fine arts	2	32	1(1-1)
(e) Music	2	32	1(1-1)
Extra-curricular activities	5	80	
Total	50	800	28

Practicum session (block teaching + assessment) eight weeks, two credits.



Diploma in Education programme: timetable for the second semester (16 weeks)

Subject	Weekly periods	Total periods	Assigned credits
Academic subjects:	5	80	4 (3-2)
(a) Myanmar	5	80	4 (3-2)
(b) English	5	80	4 (3-2)
(c) Mathematics	5	80	4 (3-2)
(d) Physics/history	5	80	4 (3-2)
(e) Chemistry/geography	5	80	4 (3-2)
(f) Biology/economics	5	80	4 (3-2)
Physical education and co-curricular subjects:			
(a) Physical education	7	112	1(1-6)
(b) Industrial arts/domestic science	2	32	1(1-1)
(c) Agriculture	2	32	1(1-1)
(d) Fine arts	2	32	1(1-1)
(e) Music	2	32	1(1-1)
Extra-curricular activities	5	80	
Total	50	800	29

Diploma holders can apply for entry into an institute of education where they can follow a one-year programme leading to the award of the B.Ed. degree. The structure of the course (end of the 1990s) is shown below:

Bachelor of education (third year): weekly timetable

Subject	Teaching periods per week		Remarks
	Lecture	Tutorial/practical	
Political science	3	–	
Educational theory and practice	3	1	
Educational psychology	3	1	
English proficiency	3	2	
Competency in school subjects and methodologies: (a) Myanmar language (b) English language (c) History (d) Geography (e) Economics (f) Mathematics (g) Chemistry (h) Physics (i) Biology (j) Special physical education	8	4	A student needs to specialize only in two arts/science subjects
Co-curricular subjects/activities (a) School health (b) Home economics (*) (c) Physical education (**)	1	–	(*) For female students only. One practical session per week in the evening after school hours. (**) Three periods per week in the morning before school hours.
Total	20	8	

The structure of the one-year postgraduate diploma in teaching (end of the 1990s) is shown in the tables below:

Postgraduate diploma in teaching (first semester)

Subject	Modality(*)	Credits
Educational theory	I – I	2
Educational psychology	I – I	2
Methodology I	(3–2)	5
Language proficiency I	(1–2)	3
Academic proficiency I	(1–2)	6
General studies I	(3–3)	7
Instructional design I	(3–4)	5
Practicum (Level I)	(1–4)	1
Total credits		31

(*) Expository/Interactive periods per week

Postgraduate diploma in teaching (second semester)

Subject	Modality(*)	Credits
Educational administration	I – I	2
Educational test and measurement	I – I	2
Methodology II	(3–2)	5
Language proficiency II	(1–2)	3
Academic proficiency II	(1–2)	6
General studies II	(3–3)	7
Instructional design II	(3–4)	5
Practicum (Level II)	(1–4)	1
Total credits		31

(*) Expository/Interactive periods per week.

The Institutes of Education in Yangon and Mandalay also offer a two-year course leading to the M.Ed. degree. This course is designed for those educators and pedagogues who have already obtained a B.Ed. degree. Applicants have to pass the entrance examination for selection and placement.

In the first term of the first year, all candidates must follow a compulsory course consisting of four core modules. In the second term, an elective course of four advanced-level modules is given. In the second year, candidates have to choose one specialization from ten major fields offered. This specialization is composed of eight



advanced modules. For each module there are expositions and one interactive discussion or seminar.

Year	Term	Modules	Mode of presentation per week	
			Expository	Interactive
I	I	Compulsory core courses		
		Philosophical foundations of education	3	1
		Psychological foundations of education	3	1
		Current education	3	1
		Information processing technology	3	1
I	II	Core + elective courses		
		Advanced educational philosophy	3	1
		Advanced educational psychology	3	1
		Modern pedagogy	3	1
		Research methodology or educational statistics	3	1
II	I	Specialization Courses		
		Module 1	3	1
		Module 2	3	1
		Module 3	3	1
		Module 4	3	1
II	II	Module 5	3	1
		Module 6	3	1
		Module 7	3	1
		Module 8	3	1

The ten fields of specialization are: educational administration and supervision; educational planning and economics of education; educational testing and measurement; curriculum development; pedagogy; teacher education; comparative education; sociology of education; history of education; and educational technology.

Bachelor of Education degree holders are considered as teaching professionals Grade 3 and appointed as senior assistant teacher (SAT) in upper secondary (high) schools. Postgraduate degree holders are considered as teaching professionals Grade 4.

In higher education institutions, academic staff must possess at least a master's degree. The academic qualifications of teachers under the Department of Basic Education by the end of the 1990s are shown in the following table:

Academic qualifications of teachers

Qualification	Primary teachers		Junior assistant teachers		Senior assistant teachers	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Below Matriculation examination	19.5	16.9	1.3	2.2	0.4	–
Matriculation examination pass	42.6	52.5	14.7	12.4	2.7	1.3
B.A. / B.Sc. / LL.B (Bachelor of Laws)	31.1	27.5	82.5	81.3	63.6	82.8
B.Com. / B.Econ. / B.Ed. / B.Ag.	.01	1.6	1.1	3.2	29.5	11.8
B.A (Hons.) / B.Sc. (Hons.)	.01	1.1	0.4	0.4	2.3	3.9
M.A. / M.Sc.	–	–	–	–	1.5	–

The following table shows the percentage of teachers without a teaching qualification in 1995/96:

Percentage of teachers without a teaching qualification (1995/96)

Teachers without a teaching qualification	Percentage
Senior assistant teachers	8.4%
Middle school teachers	57.8% (56.5% are university degree holders)
Primary school teachers	56.6% (27.7% are university degree holders)

According to official estimates, 97.7% of primary school teachers and 93.8% of secondary school teachers were certified to teach according to the national standards in 2005/06. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

In-service training programmes aiming at reducing the percentage of teachers without a teaching qualification include: the college-based teacher-training programme, the township-based teacher-training programme, and the teacher-training programme through distance education.

The first two programmes were designed to train primary and lower secondary school teachers without a teaching qualification. The duration of in-service training is six months (four sessions per month during the weekends), focusing on: developmental and psychological aspects of the children; theories of learning; preparation of lessons for primary school children; effective teaching methodologies; development and utilization of teaching aids; assessment and evaluation techniques;



remedial measures for slow learners; teaching pedagogy. Teachers who pass the final examination are awarded the Certificate (in the case of primary school teachers) or the Diploma (for lower secondary school teachers) in Education.

Selection of teachers for the teacher-training programme through distance education is based on the seniority of service. A modular approach and a credit system are used. Regular assignments are given and systematically assessed. In addition, assessment and evaluation of the trainees is carried out during and at the end of the training after two-week face to face direct contact with the instructors. The programme includes: broadcasting of the lessons through radio, including the guidelines for these lessons; distribution of lessons tapes together with the printed lessons; TV lessons together with the guidelines.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) programme and the Postgraduate Diploma in Multimedia Arts (Education) (PGDMA) programme were initiated in 1999/2000 and are conducted by the Institutes of Education to produce more qualified teachers. Both programmes accept pre-service and in-service trainees. The PGDMA programme has been introduced to cater to the needs of schools for teachers skilled in ICT to manage multimedia classrooms. The final consolidation component of this course focuses on information and communication technology and pedagogy related to it. Upon successful completion of the PGDT programme, trainees are appointed as lower secondary teachers, while PGDMA graduates are appointed as lower secondary teachers in charge of multimedia classrooms. Yangon Institute of Education has initiated another programme to increase the number of qualified teachers, known as the Certificate in Educational Technology (CET). This provides pre-service teacher education to master's degree holders from various higher education institutions who are interested in entering the teaching profession.

In addition, Yangon Institute of Education and Sagaing Institute of Education offer a two-year distance learning B.Ed correspondence degree programme for in-service upper secondary education teachers. Upon successful completion of the programme, trainees are awarded the B.Ed degree. Qualified B.Ed degree holders are permitted to continue to study for their master of education (M.Ed) degree. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) programme was introduced at Yangon Institute of Education in 2000/01 to enable outstanding M.Ed degree holders to pursue advanced studies. (Ministry of Education, 2004).

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Web resources

Ministry of Education: <http://www.myanmar-education.edu.mm/> [In English. Last checked: April 2011. Apparently the site is not accessible from outside the country.]

Ministry of Science and Technology: <http://www.most.gov.mm/> [In English. Last checked: April 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>