

MOE Programs Benefiting from World Bank Support

Decentralizing Funding for Schools Project (DFSP),
Inclusive Access to Quality Education Project (IAQE)
and
Additional Financing (AF) to the IAQE Project

Social Assessment Report
November 2020

Ministry of Education
Myanmar

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Abbreviations

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AE	Alternative Education
AE-QASF	Alternative Education Quality Assurance Standards Framework
AF	Additional Financing
ATEO	Assistant Township Education Officer
BETF	Bank-Executed Trust Fund
BMY	Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Yathedaung
CESR	Comprehensive Education Sector Review
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CBO	Community Based Organization
DAE	Department of Alternative Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEO	District Education Officer
DFSP	Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project
DLI	Disbursement-linked Indicator
DTEO	Deputy Township Education Officer
DTVET	Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
DWT	Daily Wage Teacher
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organization
EBEP	Ethnic Basic Education Provider
ECMP	Education for Children on the Move
EGMA	Early Grade Math Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGT	Early Grade Teaching
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EU	European Union
FM	Financial Management
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
IAQE	Inclusive Access and Quality Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCA	National Ceasefire Agreement
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan

NFE	Non-formal Education
NFME	Non-formal Middle School Education
NFPE	Non-formal Primary Education
NFPE EP	NFPE Equivalency Program
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NYEC	National Youth Education Certificate
PDO	Project Development Objective
PFM	Public Financial Management
SA	Social Assessment
SIF	School Improvement Fund
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SISP	School Improvement Support Program
SITE	School-based In-service Teacher Education
SQASF	School Quality Assurance Standards Framework
SQIC	School Quality Improvement Committee
SQIP	School Quality Improvement Plan
SREO	State and Region Education Office
TA	Technical Assistance
TCSF	Teacher Competency Standards Framework
TEO	Township Education Office
TLC	Temporary Learning Center
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

This is an updated Social Assessment (SA) drawing on previous SA reports prepared and disclosed in 2014 and 2016 for the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project (DFSP), and in 2019 for the DFSP Additional Financing (AF) and the Inclusive Access to Quality Education Project (IAQE). The objective of the assessment is to assess and provide recommendations about the continued support through the DFSP and the IAQE, and the new support through the AF to the IAQE to key Myanmar Ministry of Education (MOE) flagship programs. While continuing support to ongoing MOE programs as before, the AF IAQE expands the scope of previous engagement by providing additional support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. New engagement includes activities to improve access and quality of basic education in conflict-affected areas in Chin, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states with specific emphasis on education access disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Social Assessment includes evaluation and lessons learned from the work done on DFSP and IAQE to date. The MOE programs are supported by the World Bank through existing and new projects and additional funding to support education.

2. PROPOSED PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

The DFSP's original objective beginning in 2014 was "to help improve and expand Myanmar's School Grants Program and Student Stipends Program." The updated objective under the AF for 2018-2021 is "to improve inclusiveness of school funding management and enhance support to teachers' professional development while increasing transition rates of poor and at-risk students." Support to MOE programs through the AF for the DFSP program is in the form of a \$54 million grant.

DFSP comprises four components: (i) Expansion and Improvement of the School Improvement Support Program (SISP); (ii) Expansion and Improvement of the Student Stipend Program (SSP); (iii) Capacity Improvement Support to Strengthen Monitoring and Implementation of Programs which comprises the Early Learning Program (ELP), and (iv) the Teacher Mentoring and Cluster Support Program (TMSCP). Currently, some programs under the DFSP, such as the School Improvement Support Program (SISP) are operating in every school in every township country-wide, while other programs are operating in select schools in select townships, such as the stipend program which is currently implemented in 55 townships. To mitigate risks around social inclusion and discrimination in the country in general, eligibility for AF funding under the SISP and SSP will be more restrictive while all schools and education officials will remain eligible for support under the TMSCP and capacity improvement activities.

The IAQE project is comprised of \$180 million in funding (\$80 million in grants and \$100 million in credit). The IAQE is expected to be implemented over four school years, beginning in 2019–2020 and ending in 2022–2023. The primary objectives are "to improve equitable access to, and quality of, basic education delivered through formal, non-formal and complementary institutions and providers". This will be achieved through four program components: a) improving quality and inclusion in formal basic education schools; b) improving access to education for marginalized children; c) strengthening public financial management system and capacity; d) technical assistance.

The IAQE AF provides \$14.75 million in funding to deepen the support of the IAQE project to beneficiaries in conflict-affected Chin, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These states are among those identified by Myanmar's Humanitarian Response Plan 2020, and the activities to be supported are among those identified by the Myanmar COVID-19 National Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector. The objective of the AF remains the same as IAQE, with specific emphasis on education access disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. An added component will support (a) improving access to and quality of formal basic education in conflict-affected areas for continued learning, (b) improving access to, and quality of, alternative education in conflict-affected areas for continued learning and (c) Strengthening management support and school-based planning for education delivery during conflicts and other emergencies.

For the purposes of this social assessment, subcomponents in both projects and AF fall under the following categories of MOE programs to be supported: Financing; Teacher and human resources management; non-formal education/alternative education; ethnic education providers; assistance to Rakhine state and support in response to COVID-19. All supported program are aligned with different strategies and chapter of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) and the Myanmar COVID-19 National Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector. These categories are addressed individually below.

2.1 FINANCING

The financing category includes WB support to public financial management reforms (planning and budgeting), school improvement funding, and individual student stipends. While these MOE programs received ongoing WB support as part of the existing DFSP, the IAQE funding extends WB support to MOE's student stipends program (SSP) and school improvement support program (SISP) through top-up school improvement funding and linkage with quality standards and initiate support to larger public financial management reforms in the sector.

2.1.1 School Improvement Support Program

Since 2009-2010 and with support from the World Bank from 2014 onwards, a nationwide School Improvement Support Program (SISP) is providing a transparent, reliable and flexible source of resources to all government and monastic basic education schools, reaching all 48,000 government-sanctioned and registered monastic basic education (primary, middle, and high) schools.

Through the AF DFSP, nationwide school improvement funding continue to be supported. The yearly amount of School Improvement Funding (SIF) ranges between US\$250 and US\$15,000 per school depending on student enrollment and funds are managed by the schools in line with a School Improvement Plan (SIP) and budget prepared in collaboration with a SIF committee and publicly disclosed on school notice boards. The SIF is a key part of ensuring access to free and compulsory primary education as it greatly decreases the need for parents to contribute to basic school operational costs.

Through the IAQE, schools in about one-third of all townships in Myanmar (about 15,000 formal government schools) are eligible for top-up funding. This allows for 3 million students to benefit from attending better-financed and better-planned schools. Top-up funding averages US\$1000 per school and targets the most disadvantaged schools. Major repairs and upgrading of school facilities which are

currently managed outside of the SISP framework are now allowed. Schools are able to secure funding for major repairs and the IAQE will support strengthening of training and engineering support and actions to mitigate the risk of incentives to bend the rules to access the funds raise concerns on the quality of planning for land use and construction, as well as completeness and structural soundness of the facilities.

2.1.2 Stipends

Stipends are currently being paid to close to 200,000 (in 2017-18) poor students to reduce poor households' financial burden and resulting (demand-driven) drop-outs. This is a significant increase from the MOE'S previous stipend program which reached 11,000 students in 2014. The AF DFSP extends the stipend program to two additional townships in Rakhine state. The two additional townships receiving student stipends in Rakhine state have uniform coverage, meaning the program is available to all schools and all students.

2.1.3 Public Financial Management

Through the IAQE project, the WB is supporting the strengthening of PFM institutional capacity and systems in the education sector, aligned with PFM reforms of MOPF, through specific improvements in planning and budgeting, budget execution and reporting, and internal control and oversight. Institutional strengthening and capacity development includes an initial mapping of the horizontal and vertical financial management functions, the preparation of a PFM assessment and debottlenecking analysis and process-driven road map, and the development and delivery of a basic PFM curriculum for all budget and finance officers (on both national and subnational levels). In planning and budgeting, efforts will focus on the gradual introduction of a multiyear performance-based approach, which will involve expanding the scope of the NESP planning platform and current e-submission of the budget templates as well as designing links between planning and budgeting for the consolidation of output-based budget information. On budget execution and reporting, the bulk of the work will support the strengthening of the existing MOE accounting system in alignment with MOPF reforms.

2.1.4 Education for Children on the Move (ECMP)

Through the IAQE project, the WB is supporting the establishment and implementation of the ECMP. The ECMP aims to institutionalize mechanisms to ensure formal schools are adequately serving the needs of children from displaced and migrant households. Schools under the ECMP will be regular formal schools, i.e. branch or fully sanctioned schools, staffed by government teachers teaching the MOE curriculum during regular school hours and receiving SIF and other regular government contribution. The differences between these schools and others will be that they will receive targeted support to account for the special need of the children in their catchment areas. The program targets three main groups of children (a) children from households displaced by conflicts and/or natural disasters or from migrant households relocating to host villages already served by a formal school, (b) children from households displaced by conflicts and/or natural disasters or from migrant households relocating to new settlement not served by a formal school, and (c) children displaced by conflict and living in internally displaced persons (IDPs) sites in Rakhine. For children in category (a) and (b), support may take the form of additional funding to build temporary facilities (using the major repair funding stream) to house one or more additional classrooms, teachers and teacher assistants (language) potentially receiving additional incentives, and material and

SIF, etc. For children in category (c), the ECMP will frame the progressive transfer of responsibilities of the temporary learning spaces (TLSs) from humanitarian partners to MOE and improvements in the inclusiveness of services delivered by MOE schools already operating in IDP sites. It therefore applies to all schools or TLSs serving IDP children whether they live in a location called a camp, a village, or a transit site. This framing will take the form of “plans for inclusive education service delivery” that the World Bank will review and the Education and Technical and Vocational Education Sector Coordination Group (ETVSCG) will endorse. The plans must be consistent with the positions of HCT and EiE partners for this particular site and be compliant with the World Bank safeguard policies. For schools/TLs in an IDP site to continue to receive ECMP support, M&E data must confirm that the plan is implemented satisfactorily. The above-mentioned conditions are set out in the ECMP OGs. They must be met before schools/TLs in an IDP site is considered eligible to receive financial or in-kind support under the project. However, financial support for “major repairs” will never be eligible.

2.2 TEACHERS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

There are nearly 350,000 basic education teachers in Myanmar and, their training, competencies, and practices vary widely and are unevenly distributed in key dimensions such as townships, urban/rural, category of schools, etc. Substantial progress is being achieved on pre-service teacher education reforms (upgrade of the Education Colleges (ECs) from 2-year diploma to 4-year degree awarding institutions, drafting of a Teacher Competency Standards Framework (TCSF), etc.) but progress on in-service training has been slower. Currently teachers only get ad-hoc, sporadic in-service professional development and there is a lack of cohesive framework: materials (courses, modules) are available but the mechanism for harmonizing them for wider usage and ties to career progression and promotion are missing. Because of the promotion system leading to the assignment of less experienced and less qualified teachers in lower grades and because of literature shows that gaps in achievement in early grades tend to be magnified over time, disparities in teacher’s competencies are likely to have the most lasting impact on children in early grades.

DFSP and IAQE support MOE in strengthening the skills, motivations and performance of basic education teachers through mentoring and in-service training (including on peace and inclusive education and early grades literacy and numeracy) as well as through continuous professional development linked to human resource management reform.

2.2.1 Mentoring and Cluster

The mentoring element of the Teacher Mentoring and Cluster Support Program (TMCSPP) targeting teachers with less than four years of experience was successfully launched and piloted in 40 townships in 2016–17, then expanded to an additional 40 and 70 townships in 2017–18 and 2018–19, respectively, for a total of now 150 participating townships in 2018–19. Over the duration of the DFSP AF, the program scope will continue to expand, ultimately covering all townships in 2020–21.

The additional funding also provides support for school clusters that meet regularly bringing teachers together to discuss a variety of learning and teaching issues, and Cluster Improvement Funds (CIFs) to provide food, transport, and materials for selected clusters.

2.2.2 Early Grade In-service Training

The early grade in-service training (EGT) program, informed by MOE's early grade learning assessments and pilot of an early reading intervention, trains teachers and head teachers on strategies and methods to effectively promote literacy and numeracy in children from different backgrounds and ethnicities. The program trains teachers and head teachers on interactive teaching methods and skills, best-practices pedagogical strategies, use of languages, strategies to promote literacy/numeracy-enhancing environment, use of formative/classroom-based assessments, etc. It also provides trainees with scripted lessons and activity booklets and specific teaching and learning material. The content of the program is delivered through (i) face-to-face training in township-level multiplier training and review workshops, cluster meetings, and in-school visits, (ii) an online learning platform (accessible on computer and mobile), and (iii) in State/Region level seminars where most performing Early Grade teachers would present success stories and challenges.

2.2.3 Peace and Inclusive Education In-service Training

The peace and inclusive education (PT) program trains teachers, head teachers, and parents on topics including peace, addressing interpersonal and community conflict, psychosocial wellness, human rights (and child rights), cultural and gender sensitivity, tolerance, non-discrimination, and so on. Specific content and strategies will be informed by prior and ongoing experiences such as the peace education resources for teacher training developed with support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), training module on child rights developed by the MOE for the mentors, and other resources and experiences of CSOs (including those participating in the Education for Peace Working Group).

2.3 NON-FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

The non-formal education subcomponent supports scaling up supply of the non-formal education (NFE) services through government and innovative public-private partnerships with accredited alternative education (AE) providers (NGOs, CSOs, etc.). In consultation with relevant stakeholders, MOE is developing a framework for the MOE's Department of Alternative Education (DAE) to have contracts with non-state alternative or non-formal education providers, establish accreditation mechanisms for AE providers, and to expand the scope of services provided and managed directly by DAE.

WB financial support may allow DAE to provide grants to outside alternative education providers for their services, pending ongoing discussions and decision making. The AE partners will be responsible for managing the entire value chain supporting the service they are providing, including teachers/facilitators; premises/location;¹ carrying out enrollment campaigns to attract students; and delivering quality teaching using the approved MOE curriculum, teaching/learning materials, and using appropriate mode/language of instruction. The AE providers will receive an implementation grant between MMK

¹ The NFE classes will be delivered in a range of existing infrastructure, such as community libraries (established and supported by local communities), community halls, and existing primary schools.

25,000 and MMK 35,000 per month per student from the DAE to cater to all associated expenses and their teachers/facilitators will undergo compulsory training by MOE-/DAE-sanctioned entities.

Applying a two-tier model (AE provided by the Government or AE providers) to most effectively address the issue of high out-of-school children, especially in marginalized states and regions such as Shan, Chin, and Rakhine, and townships will allow the MOE/DAE to effectively increase supply where local providers currently do not exist or are of an insufficient standard, and in more hard-to-reach areas. About 77,000 students will benefit from quality and accredited accelerated non-formal education (NFE) programs delivered in the targeted townships. The priority areas for the expansion will be in disadvantaged communities within the targeted townships of this operation with the highest number of children (a) having never been to school, (b) dropping out of their local (formal) primary schools, (c) lacking access to a formal primary school, and (d) having been displaced by conflict.

The DAE will also develop/expand the national exam and certification system. Learners who graduate from either the DAE's or AE's non-formal education programs will be issued an MOE-recognized completion certificate to enable them to either continue their education pathway to formal schools or enroll in other AE programs or enter the labor market.

2.4 ETHNIC BASIC EDUCATION PROVIDERS

With WB support, the MOE is also embarking on structured dialogue to inform potential partnership with ethnic education providers. This program is informed by past experiences as well as deliverables from the ongoing preparatory study. Future support will allow for the continued facilitated dialogue between the MOE, EBEPs, and other stakeholders (including the large religious schools' network) to develop appropriate roadmaps toward establishing a minimum and coherent unionwide education framework (one system with several systems) to promote and protect children's access to quality education even in the middle of political and armed conflicts.

Establishing formal partnership mechanisms (roadmaps) between the EBEPs and MOE will contribute to equitable access to quality education for children in Myanmar. However, this will require agreements on ways for state and non-state providers (EBEPs) to interact and work together on a common (or at least connecting) platform of mutual respect and understanding. Currently, the MOE and complementary providers engage in various forms (formal/informal) of collaboration and levels of interaction but none have so far reached the level of formal partnership agreements.

The partnership framework would be operationalized via the roadmaps, and the MoE and complementary providers (EBEPs and religious schools) would design and pilot selected initiatives for partnerships, coordination and cooperation. The topic of the pilots may include (i) CPD activities for teachers/leaders, (ii) equivalency in core curriculum (aligned with jointly agreed upon national quality standards) and space for local curriculum (languages, culture, history), (iii) innovative funding arrangements, and (iv) certification mechanism to recognize students' education achievement and credentials. Finally, MOE and complementary providers would take the dialogue one more step forward to develop the coherent and Union wide partnership framework (which may include, for example, agreements on core curriculum, standards, language, teachers, quality assurance, accreditation, certificate, transfer, funding, etc.) and to ensure recognition of the role of non-state providers in states and regions education development plans.

If a successful partnership is defined and realized, about 70,000 students will benefit from quality education delivered through EBEPS partnering with the MOE.

2.5 ASSISTANCE TO RAKHINE STATE

The approach for implementing MOE programs benefiting from WB financial and technical support in Rakhine state is slightly different from other states and regions. In terms of targeting, to minimize social tension and in light of the high needs in Rakhine state, otherwise targeted MOE programs have adopted a full state approach for SISP, teacher in-service training (PT and EGT), and non-formal education (rather than targeting and selection of some schools/teachers). Furthermore, for two townships in Rakhine benefitting from the student stipends program, implementation differs from other states and regions and has uniform coverage for all schools and all students receiving school stipends.

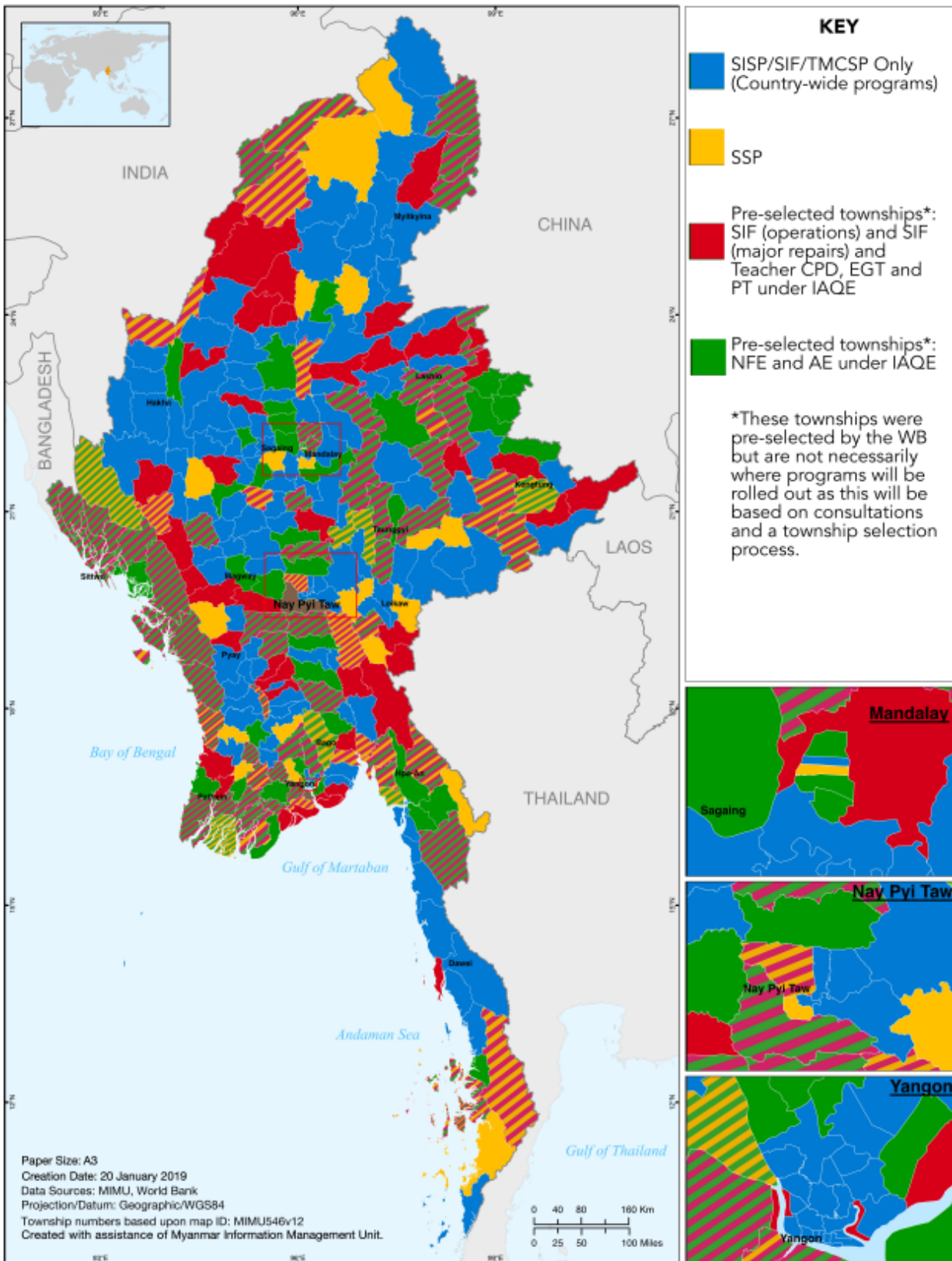
While the repatriation timeline for Muslim² refugees from Rakhine State currently in Bangladesh is unknown, in the Northern Rakhine State townships of Buthidaung, Maungdaw and Yathedaung (BMY), WB support will enable the DAE and/or AE local partners in getting ready to systematically offer the NFE classes to returnees (when repatriation happens) to accelerate reintegration in the formal system. The NFE classes could serve as a platform for returnees to catch up (accelerated learning programs provided by nongovernment entities, for a transition period) and complete formal education to the level they would have without the displacement. The local AE providers everywhere, but especially in Rakhine are required to meet certain minimum standards around inclusion and languages to be accredited and receive implementation grants. Specific content will also be designed to meet the needs of youth, of all communities including returnees and remaining Muslim, Rakhine and other ethnic groups in the state.

The EGT and PT is being implemented in BMY in similar ways to other parts of the country, while addressing constraints specific to the state. The content and pedagogical tools are being designed to be applicable for contexts where early grade students do not speak Myanmar as a first language and for teachers with low levels of education and teacher training qualifications. This is relevant for many remote ethnic areas of Myanmar as well as BMY where the lack of trained local teachers is important and the use of Myanmar language outside Rakhine ethnic communities is rare. Finally, teachers in the TLSs servicing IDP children in selected townships (include all townships in Rakhine) are eligible and encouraged to complete the training, which is relevant for BMY and other townships in the states. The same is true of teachers in other non-state community/religious schools.

A map of townships where different program activities operate and will operate (if information is available) can be found below.

² In line with the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission report on Rakhine State (2017), we neither use the term “Bengali” nor “Rohingya” but refer to this population as “Muslims” or “the Muslim community in Rakhine”. This does not include the Kaman Muslims in Rakhine or other Muslims in the country.

Map 1. WB support to MOE programs by township (2018 – 2021)



2.6 SUPPORT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The AF to IAQE will support activities in Chin, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These activities will address, within the targeted geographical areas, a number of urgent issues related to education access, quality, equity, and school management as identified by the Myanmar COVID-19 National Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector. The activities in the AF fit within the broad categories of activities supported by IAQE (e.g., school infrastructure upgrades, teacher capacity building, delivery of early grade teaching, strengthening monitoring and evaluation, etc.), and the AF does not propose any activities that present environmental and social risks meaningfully different than activities supported by IAQE.

The additional resources would be used to extend the scope of existing activities within the four states to address new issues raised by the Covid-19 pandemic. These Covid-19 sensitive new measures are listed below:

- On access: Provision of additional learning spaces in IDP camps and additional temporary classrooms in existing schools for social distancing (renovations and new construction on existing school footprint); provision of individual moveable desks for children; and provision of learning kits and book corners for schools and students (including in ethnic languages) for use both in school and at home.
- On quality: Development and implementation of classroom-based student assessments to identify students needing remedial education, especially due to school closures or difficulty in access; capacity building of teachers in the delivery of remedial education; introduction of mechanisms for teachers to remain connected to students during extended school closures; training of teachers/facilitators in IDP camps on early grade teaching, and teaching to children with disabilities; recruitment, training and deployment of volunteer teachers, language teachers and teaching assistants in schools and temporary learning centers; and development of CPD modules for distance learning; and provision of pre-loaded equipment (e.g., tablets and MP players) to schools and selected teachers to provide access to such modules.
- On school management: Supporting the preparation and implementation of school-based plans to resume face-to-face classes safely after closures and to prepare responses to local outbreaks and other emergencies; provision of psycho-social support to teachers and students; and implementation of a survey of school-aged children, particularly to collect information on out-of-school children.

3. SOCIAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSULTATIONS

The SA methodology consisted of a desk review of documents including previous annual qualitative social assessment reports on existing support to MOE programs including SISP, TMCSP and SSP, monitoring and evaluation reports of existing programs, and a literature review of social inclusion in Myanmar, peace education and ethnic education. No new data collection was conducted for this SA, given the wealth of data and reports accumulated over the last several years and the ongoing study on ethnic basic education, which have provided descriptive data detailing the implementation of the existing MOE program and consultations with stakeholders.

Consultations with stakeholders regarding the WB's support for the MOE programs since 2014 have been extensive in terms of number of participants, geographic reach, type of engagement and number of evaluations, spot checks, discussions, social assessments and consultations. Public consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (including CSOs and NGOs) on the original DFSP design (focusing on SISP and SSP) were held in Yangon and in Nay Pyi Taw, in February and March 2014 and an open-door presentation on DFSP achievements so far and AF design was held in Yangon in 2017. State/Region level consultations to select townships for SSP in all States and Regions in March 2015 and in Rakhine State in 2019. Workshops, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews were conducted across the country, and particularly focused on ethnic states in 2018 for consultations around extended and new support. The WB also engaged extensively with development partners through coordination groups involved in ethnic education and alternative education as well as the Rakhine INGO initiative. In 2019, MOE held consultations on the earlier SA findings and proposed social recommendations for MOE programs in every state and region.

Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations found in this SA come directly from consultations with relevant stakeholders regarding implementation of previous elements of the DFSP and the IAQE such as the SSP or SISP. Feedbacks gathered through the consultations regularly fed into improvements to the protocol and process of programs implementation. Lessons learned and recommendations also come from extensive consultations with stakeholders during the design of the IAQE and AF DFSP in 2018 and 2019. The following section explains the sources of data and type of consultations included in the SA.

3.1 DFSP

For support to the school stipend program (SSP), education directors at the township level organized consultations and meetings in their areas with state/region prime ministers and social ministers, and invited MPs, departmental representatives, township education officers, religious leaders, CSOs and ethnic leaders in all 55 townships where the program is implemented. Township education officers (TEOs) then selected 3 communities for initial consultations on the stipend program based on local social assessments conducted in 2015. Communities selected were the township's poorest, a mixed community and a single ethnicity community. All township consultations were in Myanmar language with TEOs assigned as translators where needed. Following the social assessments, committees for the implementation of the township school stipend were formed. Township level committees include head

teachers, township level officers and CSO/NGO representatives. Generally, these committees had low ethnic and religious diversity but a high percentage of women.

Free, prior, and informed consultations held in all townships with vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities, indicated strong appreciation and broad community support for both the SSP and SISP. There were no signs of discrimination against religious or ethnic minorities in the implementation of the programs. That said, township level committees, as mentioned above, could improve their outreach to vulnerable communities in order to not only involve parents of students which could potentially benefit from the stipend program, but to also involve parents and other representatives of these communities in the implementation of the program.

Respondents for the 2016-17 school year SA reported that despite the stipend amount being relatively small, the program has shown positive signs of enabling students from poor families who face financial and other difficulties to enroll in school and stay in school. Stipend money has helped vulnerable families to cover student costs for school uniforms, an umbrella, shoes, school texts, notebooks and other supplies, lunches, snacks, and transportation. Respondents also mentioned that getting an education was important for children. However, consultation with stakeholders revealed that poor and vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities, often face greater challenges than just financial ones in enrolling their children in school and supporting them while they complete their education. A rapid conflict assessment also highlighted several areas where there are intra-community and intercommunity tensions generated by the presence of armed groups in some states where conflict is ongoing.

Key stakeholders include the MOE and other government agencies and officials, township education officers, State/Region education directors, communities, parents, students, and teachers. NGOs and CSOs have also been included since 2014 as stakeholders in ongoing consultations regarding the DFSP. Monitoring and evaluation reports from the DFSP project show broad level support from stakeholders and significant interest in program expansion. Stakeholders expressed broad support and interest in project expansion in terms of amount of funding, geographic reach, and number of beneficiaries.

3.2 IAQE

In addition to ongoing consultations with parents, students and local school board members, for the new project elements in the IAQE, some new stakeholders were consulted, particularly EBEPs, EAOs, state parliaments, ethnic political parties, ethnic language and culture committees, and NGOs and CSOs involved in non-formal education provision. Consultations with this group of stakeholders on program impacts, activities and design included workshops, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Consultations held in Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Shan (Central, Northern, Eastern and Southern), and Kayah states included a minimum of 20 interviews per location and a minimum of 3 FGDs with community members and parents, with some consultations, like Central Shan State including up to 17 FGDs. In Chin state, a State level workshop was held in Hakha in August 2018 with 50 participants.

Throughout 2018, most of the major EAOs and all the largest EBEPs were consulted about the programs, its potential benefits and adverse impacts, its design and needed mitigation measures. Generally, EBEPs have shown interest in collaboration with MOE and with each other. Some have requested more support in interacting with the MOE, others have requested more of a focus on language. As part of the project consultations, some EBEPs have held meetings directly with the MOE, others have indicated interest in

doing so. For others, particularly in areas of ongoing conflict, it is unlikely that meetings will be able to be held before the project commences – this will be revisited during the project period.

In Mon State, consultations were held with the leadership of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC), head teachers from the Mon National Schools (MNS), Mon State Members of Parliament (MPs), representatives of Mon political parties, and Mon CSOs.

In Kachin State, consultations were held with the Kachin Education Consortium (KEC), Kachin Education Foundation (KEF), Kachin Independence Organization Education Department (KIO-ED), three local Literature and Culture Committees, two Kachin State MPs, and representatives from ethnic political parties from Kachin State.

In Karen State, discussions were held with the Karen State Education Department (KSED); the Karen Education Department (KED); Karen Women’s Organization; Karen National Union (KNU)/Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)/ Peace Council; Seventh-day Adventist Schools; Pa-O Literature and Cultural Committee (PLCC); and Karen National Democratic Party (KNDP).

In Shan State, consultations were held with EAOs, EBEPs, CSOs, ethnic political parties. Those consulted include: Parami Development Network, Shan Literature and Culture Association, Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP) Education Department, PNO, PNLO, members of the PaO SAZ Leading Body, PaO MPs, the PaO Education College principal, head teachers in schools serving PaO communities, and a PaO Monastic School head monk. Representatives of minorities within minority ethnic groups were also consulted including representatives of the Khun Tai, Lahu, Wa, Danu and Intha.

In Kayah State, the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Kayah State Peace Monitoring Network (KSPMN), Literature and Cultural Committees, the Karenni National United Joint Committee (KNUJC) and local CSOs, schools and township education offices were consulted.

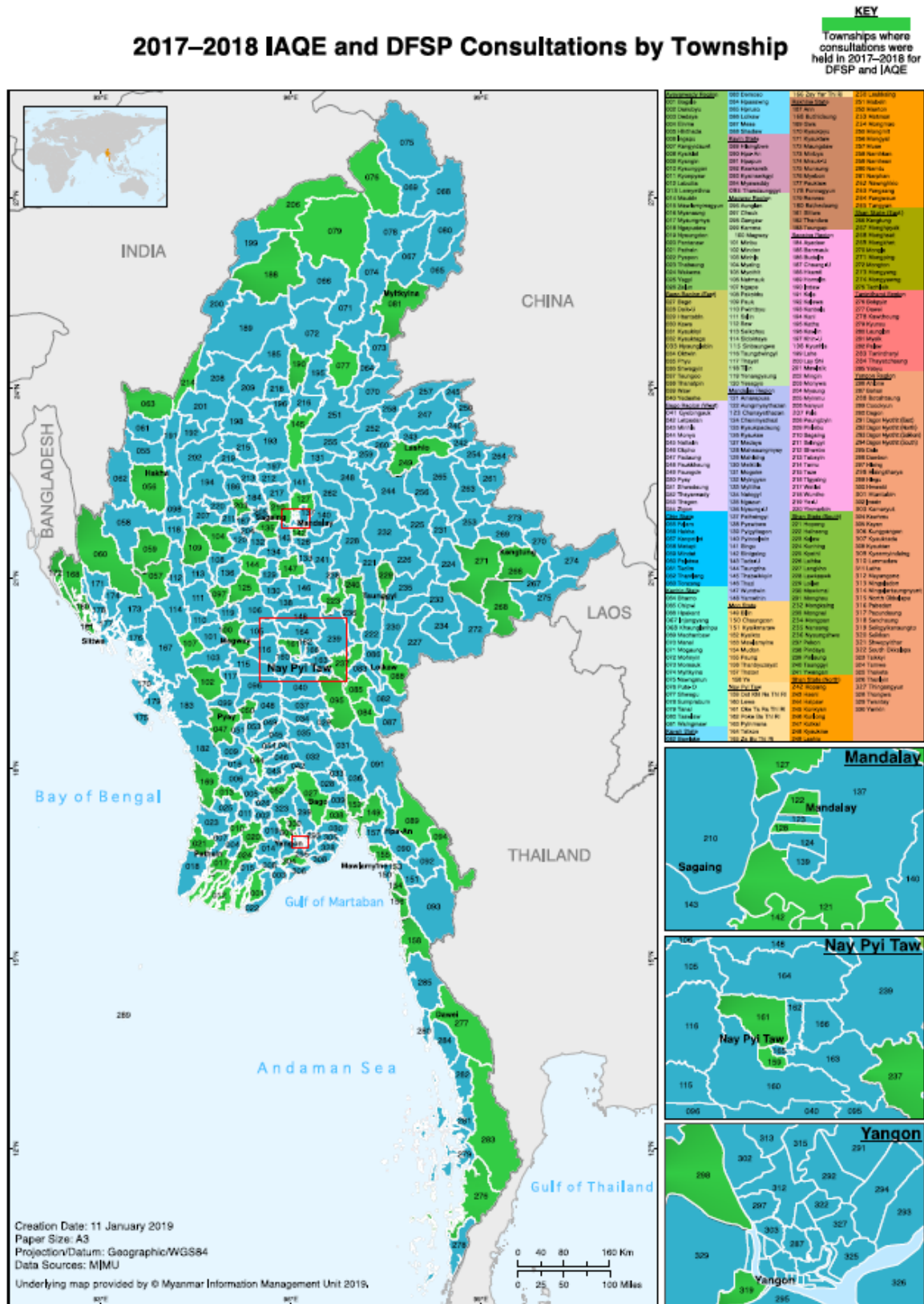
In the design of the MOE program supported through the IAQE, the MOE greatly benefited from feedbacks and suggestions gathered in consultations (i) with partners and CSO in forum such as the Sub-Sector Working Groups (SSWG) and the Education, Technical and Vocational training Sector Coordination Group (ETV-SCG); (ii) with decentralized officials, State government officials, and community members, especially in Rakhine State where MOE Union level staff including several DGs have made numerous visits since August 2017; and (iii) with specific development partners³ working closely with EBEPs.

MOE program design also benefited from feedback and suggestions compiled by the WB based on discussions held at the Education in Ethnic States and Regions (EESR) Coordination Group⁴, a presentation at the Alternative Education CSO coordination group, facilitated by myMe (an AE organization) on the 3rd of April 2018 which was attended by 39 CSO AE providers, WB frequent meetings and consultations with representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF and the Rakhine INGO Initiative convened by Save the Children to discuss in detail the situation and challenges in Rakhine with special attention to BMY and the situation of IDPs, and discussions with members of the Education in Emergencies Coordination Group. Geographic distribution of the consultations had can be seen in green in the map below.

³ These include: MEC, EU, DfID, the Australian Embassy (AusAID), UNESCO, ADB, UNICEF, ADRA, DANIDA and others.

⁴ The members of the coordination group are: Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC), ADRA, PACT, Save the Children, DFID, World Education, PLAN, The Royal Danish Embassy, VSO, EU, the Australian Embassy, World Vision International, Norwegian Peoples Aid, UNICEF and Norwegian Refugee Council.

Map 2. 2017-2018 IAQE and DFSP consultations by township



3.3 AF TO IAQE

Myanmar confirmed its first two official cases of COVID-19 on 23 March 2020. Within the week, MoE called for the closing of all schools, higher education institutions and technical and vocational education training institutes. Since then, in response to varying COVID-19 cases in different regions, MOE has followed differing closing and opening regimes, balancing reducing the risk of transmission with reducing the risk to disruption to learning.

In order to respond more comprehensively and systematically to the COVID-19 context, MOE, in collaboration with UNESCO and in consultation with development partners working in the Education Sector Coordination Group, developed the Myanmar COVID-19 National Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector. This plan is holistic, covers all States and Regions in Myanmar, as well as all education sub-sectors under MoE and provides an overall framework of strategies and interventions that aim at: i) ensuring education continuity for all learners in Myanmar despite the likely scenario of education facility closures beyond June 2020, ii) ensuring a proper planning for the reopening of education institutions, and iii) contributing to safer and more resilient education environments. Given the critical need to develop a plan for a coordinated national approach, the plan was elaborated through a rapid consultative process with education stakeholders.

The AF will fund a subset of activities in line with the Myanmar COVID-19 National Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector, in close consultations with all stakeholders to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts and funding is used most effectively. MOE and the WB held virtual consultations with stakeholders in Chin, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states, which the AF funding will target, specifically on the activities that will be supported by WB funding on October 27 – 28, 2020. The consultations included civil society and representatives of ethnic groups, as well as local government stakeholders. A separate consultation meeting was also held in Yangon on October 9, 2020 with civil society organizations based in the city.

Feedback and discussions focused on the following topics: Land use and voluntary land donation, gender-based violence risks during civil works, equal pay for men and women, volunteer teachers knowing ethnic languages, delivery of home-based learning school kits to remote or conflict-affected areas, township selection, ensuring inclusion of all children in IDP camps, non-discrimination towards children of ethnic armed group members.

4. LEGAL, SECTORAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Myanmar gained independence from the British empire in 1948, but long-standing grievances from over a century of colonial rule⁵ continue to impact contemporary dynamics. There is a widespread perception that the British colonial administration privileged certain groups over others. When negotiations for the formation of the independent state of Burma were held, efforts were made to bring all of the territory of British Burma, much of which had previously enjoyed considerable autonomy, into the independent state of Burma. While the compromise known as the Panglong Agreement was reached in 1947, following

⁵ Myanmar was annexed to British India in stages, with Arakan and the Tenasserim conquered in the First Anglo-Burmese War 1824-1826, Pegu (including Yangon) in 1852, and Upper Burma in 1885.

independence civil war broke out on multiple fronts between multiple political and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs). In some areas of the country, with the exception of some ceasefire periods, armed conflict has continued for the past 70 years.

The ongoing armed conflict, coupled with international isolation and desire for continued autonomy in frontier areas, has led to large swathes of the country, particularly in Shan, Kachin, Karen and Mon states where Myanmar government services currently (or until very recently) do not reach. Students in these areas rely on ethnic basic education providers (EBEPs) or monastic or other religious schools where available.

In 2011, the country embarked on a range of political, economic and administrative reforms, and since then successfully held national democratic elections (November 2015), which saw a landslide victory for the National League for Democracy (NLD). The second democratic elections since the transition began are scheduled for 2020.

The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), between the Myanmar Government and 10 EAOs, has initiated a political dialogue aimed at resolving many issues, including decentralization of service delivery to subnational levels of the Government. Education was not one of the services discussed in-depth as part of the NCA. Due to this, there is still an absence of formal partnership mechanisms between the MOE and EBEPs and, as a result, an absence of formal recognition of ethnic students completing grades/levels with the EBEPs.

4.1 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1.1. The 2008 Constitution

The fundamental law of Myanmar is the Constitution of 2008, which serves as the foundation for Myanmar's democratic transition. The Constitution of 2008 describes the obligations and duties of the Union with regard to education and establishes the right of all Myanmar citizens to education. Most importantly, in clause 366, the Constitution describes its obligation to citizens regarding their right to education (Chapter 8: Citizens, Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens):

Article 366. Every citizen shall, in accord with the educational policy laid down by the Union: a) have the right to education; b) shall be given basic education which the Union prescribes by law as compulsory; c) have the right to conduct scientific research, explore science, work with creativity and write, to develop the arts, and conduct research freely [with] other branches of culture.

Notably, supporting compulsory primary education is one the duties of a citizen set forth by the Constitution, and the Government of Myanmar is obliged to implement the free and compulsory primary education system. More importantly, the government is required by the Constitution to enact necessary law to ensure that citizens have the opportunity participate in matters related to the education system.

4.1.2. Other education-related laws include:⁶

The National Education Law of 2014 (amended in 2015) delineates the type of education in Myanmar (primary, vocational and higher education), the type of schools, sets up the National Education Commission which is responsible for education policy but not management, and firmly places universities under the Ministry of Education, but allows them to be independent and self-administered. The law allows for the language of teaching to be English and/or Burmese at all levels and Burmese and an ethnic language at primary level and places the expansion of ethnic language teaching in higher grades at the behest of division and state governments. It also allows for non-formal education (NFE), Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), Special Education and Distance Education. It also allows for monastic schools. Notably and controversially, the law does not allow for student or teacher unions. The National Education Law mandates 12 years of education following kindergarten.

Basic Education Law of 1964 (repealed in 1973, amended in 1989) that currently mandates the education system as 5 years of primary-level education, followed by 4 years of lower secondary-level education, and 2 years of upper secondary-level education. A new draft Basic Education Law to repeal and replace the 1973 law was sent to parliament in January 2018.

University Education Law of 1973 (amended in 1998) that mandates ministries in 13 specific sectors (currently 13) to manage universities in their sector, allows for arts and sciences universities and professional institutions. Limits degree granting at the tertiary level to institutions formed in compliance with this law.

Private Education Law of 1984 and 2006 which prohibits teachers in public schools from practicing fee-based teaching after school hours,

Technical Agricultural and Vocational Education Law of 1974 (amended in 1989) governs the activities of the Department of Technical and Vocational Education.

Private School Registration Law of 2011. The law allows for registration of private schools provided they teach the MOE curriculum, which they can supplement with other courses. Private schools cannot be established with foreign aid or with the aid of a foreign organization nor can they be missionary schools. However, in 2018 the Myanmar Investment Commission issued a notification allowing foreign investment in private schools, including 100 percent foreign ownership.

Private Education Law (Draft). Drafting of a new Private Education Law began in 2015 and has yet to be completed. Upon enactment the law will revoke the 2011 Private School Registration Law and the 1984 (2006 amended) Private Education Law.

⁶ Two other laws concerning education are the Myanmar Board of Examination Law of 1973 and the Education Research Law of 1973.

4.1.3 Laws on ethnic groups

According to the 2014 census, Myanmar has a population of 51.4 million. While ethnically disaggregated data from the census are not yet available, estimates suggest that the Bamar are the largest ethnic group, comprising around two-thirds of the population, with a large number of ethnic groups accounting for about one-third. The majority Bamar population mainly lives in the central and delta parts of the country (divided into seven administrative Regions) while the ethnic groups live mainly, though not exclusively, in the mountainous border areas (roughly corresponding to the country's seven States: Kayah, Kayin, Kachin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan). Main minority groups include Shan, Kayin, Rakhine, Chin, Mon, Kachin, and Kayah. These eight "ethnic races," including the majority Bamar, are subdivided into 135 officially recognized ethnic groups and belong to five linguistic families (Tibeto-Burman, Mon-Khmer, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, and Malayo-Polynesian); there are no population figures for ethnic group.

According to Chapter 1, clause 22 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar, the Union Government of Myanmar is committed to assisting in developing and improving the education, health, language, literature, arts, and culture of Myanmar's "national races." It is stated, that the "Union shall assist:

- To develop language, literature, fine arts and culture of the National races;
- To promote solidarity, mutual amity and respect and mutual assistance among the National races; and
- To promote socio-economic development including education, health, economy, transport and communication, [and] so forth, of less-developed National races."

The Ethnic Rights Protection Law (The Comprising of Pyi Thu Hluttaw and Amotha Hluttaw (Pyi daung su Hluttaw) Law No.8, 2015), 24th February 2015. This law provides definitions of ethnic groups, Ministry, Union minister, Ministry of State or Region, State or Region minister, roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs in ethnic affairs which means to promote sustainable socio-economic development that is including language, literature, fine arts, culture, customs and traditions of the national races, religious, historical heritages, peace and the included opportunities in 2008 Constitution of Myanmar. The constitution provides equal rights to the various ethnic groups included in the national races and a number of laws and regulations aim to preserve their cultures and traditions. This includes the establishment of the University for the Development of the National Races of the Union which was promulgated in 1991 to, among other things, preserve and understand the culture, customs and traditions of the national races of the Union, and strengthen the Union spirit in the national races of the Union while residing in a friendly atmosphere and pursuing education at the University. However, the list of recognized ethnic groups has not been updated since 1982.

Since independence, there have been recurring conflicts between the Government and a number of ethnic armed groups over a range of issues, including relating to greater autonomy, recognition of cultural rights, and governance of natural resources. The Government's peace initiative, launched in 2011, has seen the conclusion or renewal of a number of ceasefire agreements with some ethnic armed groups, although conflict continues in several areas, including in Kachin State, northern Shan State, and Rakhine State. Following a number of bilateral ceasefire agreements between the Government and ethnic armed groups, some ethnic groups have been granted authority over political and economic affairs in their areas, which in some cases are sizeable. Social and other public services were developed by ethnic authorities,

often with support from NGOs, and are still operating in several areas. Under the current government, a free media is developing, and ethnic parties and associations are politically active. Civil society organizations also play an active role.

4.2 EDUCATION SECTOR REVIEW

Myanmar's basic education services are delivered through both government and non-government education systems/providers. The MOE is the largest provider of education services (formal education) in Myanmar, accounting for 83 percent of public spending in the sector,⁷ but there is also a sizable nongovernment sector (complementary education) delivering (mostly primary) education services. The largest non-state basic education provider categories are religious schools (mostly monastic—Buddhist—but also some Christian and Islamic) and non-*Bamar* ethnic groups.

The government has identified education and poverty alleviation as key drivers to support the democratic and peace-building process and to achieve the national goal of Myanmar becoming a Middle-Income Country by 2030. In the education sector, achievement of these objectives is framed by the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), which came out of the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) which began in 2012. The NESP provides a 'roadmap' for sector-wide education reforms over five years (2016-2021) that would dramatically improve equitable access to quality education for students at all levels of the national education system. It also emphasizes the need for education benefits to be shared among broad segments of the population, and for excluded groups not to be left behind.

As a testament to the Government's education priority, public funding for education has significantly increased, on a yearly basis, between 2011–2012 when the government made primary education free and compulsory, and 2016–2017. It went from MMK 310,000 million (about US\$230 million equivalent) in 2011–2012 to more than MMK 2,177 million (about US\$1.4 billion equivalent) in 2018–19. This commendable increase reflects growth in education budgets that outstripped spending in other sectors (except economic affairs, general public services, and defense). Nevertheless, public education spending, as a percentage of Government expenditure (at around 8.7 percent) and as a percentage of GDP (at around 2.2 percent), remains considerably lower than in neighboring and comparator countries.

In recent years, Myanmar made significant progress in access to basic education, but dropout rates and the number of out-of-school children and youth remain significant. The primary net enrollment rate (NER) increased from 88 percent in 2009–2010 to 93 percent in 2014–2015, while it went from 53 percent to 55 percent at the secondary level and to 58 percent and 27 percent in middle and high school respectively.⁸

With the establishment of free primary education in 2009–2010, requiring the provision of operating funds to schools, the MOE launched a program to transfer funding (grants) to schools through Township Education Offices (TEOs). A basic framework for the amounts and flow of funds was established, but the initiative lacked a formal program with objectives, descriptions of responsibilities, performance indicators, provision for monitoring, or manuals and training to explain how the program is to be implemented. Other

⁷ The remaining 17 percent is managed by 14 other ministries providing vocational and higher education services with their own budgets. For example, the Ministry of Health runs and finances health-related universities. (World Bank. 2015. *Myanmar Public Expenditure Review 2015: Realigning the Union Budget to Myanmar's Development Priorities*.)

⁸ MOPF and World Bank (forthcoming).

challenges included the absence of clarity on how SIPs will become a key planning tool in this context and the limits to schools' ability to use the resources where their needs are the greatest.

Since 2014, the DFSP has supported Myanmar in strengthening the transfer of funding to schools (initially called school grants and now SISP) by (a) giving school head teachers and communities a greater say in how resources are spent; (b) providing a transparent, reliable, and flexible source of resources to schools; and (c) encouraging parents to be involved in their allocation. This has been a powerful signal from the MOE and the Government that education is a priority, aimed at easing that financial burden on households, at the availability of more learning materials in classrooms, and, ultimately, at better learning outcomes.

Non-formal basic education is defined as accelerated learning programs, aligned with the official MOE curriculum, delivered outside regular school hours by Government or nongovernmental institutions leading to the acquisition of core competencies comparable to formal education. Non-formal primary education (NFPE) classes have been offered since 2007 and non-formal middle school education (NFME) classes are being piloted (since 2016, with support from UNICEF).⁹ Although the 2014 National Education Law explicitly allows for NFE provided by CBOs and NGOs, the alternative education (AE) sector is substantially underdeveloped considering the need and demand nationwide, particularly in the poorest and conflicted townships.

An estimated 2.7 million children between ages 5 and 26 (about 23 percent of children and youth) in 2015-2016 have either never enrolled in school or have dropped out of the formal education system in Myanmar. These children often reside in the most marginalized and conflict-affected townships and areas. But school attendance also correlates with income: 6 out of 10 children starting grade 1 drop out before the end of middle school and among families belonging to the bottom 40 percent of the consumption distribution, this figure is 7 out of 10. The dropout rates are high for both boys and girls and differences in dropouts across richer and poorer households dwarf gender gaps. In addition to drop out rates or lack of school attendance, only about one-third of students sitting for the matriculation exam pass.

The MOE's intention is to provide realistic and achievable pathways for out-of-school and marginalized children, including those displaced by conflict or natural disasters, to enter/reenter the (formal) education system or enter the labor market equipped with recognized education achievements and necessary basic skills. In the NESP, alternative and NFE programs are proposed as strategies to reach these marginalized children, in the short to medium term.

The two current AE programs, under the responsibility of the newly formed DAE, are (a) the NFE, targeting out-of-school children and youth and (b) the summer basic literacy and functional literacy program for youth and adults. Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) classes have been offered since 2007 and Non-Formal Middle School (NFMS) classes have been piloted since 2016 by the MOE (with support from UNICEF). In addition to the Government-provided NFE services, many NGOs (including international NGOs, United Nations agencies, representatives of civil society and philanthropical entities) offer AE opportunities to out-of-school children. The MOE NFE programs currently include the NFPE and a pilot of NFME. Currently, an NFPE graduate must enter the formal system for a year, to complete grade 5, and

⁹ UNICEF is currently conducting an evaluation of the NFME pilot program which will inform the future roll-out and scale-up.

then pass the regular grade 5 exam to obtain a primary education certificate. There is no approved certificate issued after completing NFPE level 2.

The key challenges currently facing the NFE program include the lack of access for the majority of out-of-school children and youth who are working either full- or part-time (including home-based work), poor quality of classes resulting in low pass rate and re-enrollment into the formal school system, lack of relevance for students and their parents leading to sporadic attendance and dropouts, lack of attention to incorporating life and employability skills, and difficulties in obtaining approved certificates recognizing achievements and credentials.

Complementary basic education is defined as education services, some of which are aligned with the official MOE curriculum while most are not, delivered during school hours by institutions not fully sanctioned by the MOE such as TLCs in IDP camps' learning areas and ethnic education or religious providers, including monastic schools under the purview of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

Some EAOs hold large areas of territory and operate parallel, state-like agencies, delivering a range of services, including education. Some EAOs and other ethnic organizations have strong reservations about interacting with the Central Government and prefer to stay autonomous from state control and serve their own communities.

Kayin, Mon, Kayah and Kachin Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) began running their education service delivery in their respective States in various forms in the years following the 1962 military coup when all schools were nationalized. Curriculum and school facilities were all managed by the respective EAOs and/or subordinate entities of the EAOs. Their schools were set up in their control areas where MOE and other government civil servants have no access and are not allowed to travel without permission by the respective EAOs.

Different EBEPs and State based education providers provide education services to over 300,000 children, with well-established systems operating (by EAO controlled EBEPs) in Karen, Mon, Kachin, and Kayah States, among others, as well as a wide diversity of community schools, some of which are networked and/or supported by a range of NGOs, CSOs, Faith Based Organizations, or local ethnic/cultural organizations. There are also a significant number of temporary learning centers (TLCs) in IDPs camps in Rakhine and elsewhere or serving returnees (from Thailand, for example).¹⁰

Meanwhile, increases in Government spending on education and new ceasefires have recently allowed the MOE to reach new populations in ethnic areas, with the consent of the EAOs, including in "mixed" schools, particularly in Mon and Karen States. While offering communities many potential benefits, ethnic education stakeholders sometimes perceive MOE expansion as intrusive, leading to a range of political and administrative challenges.

Many ethnic nationality communities are striving for a more devolved system of locally owned education provision. Research shows that ethnic nationality demands differ widely with regard to the core aspects of these provisions (varying from accepting the Government curriculum, to expecting some locally relevant content, to having their own locally based curriculum and teaching purely in the mother tongue,

¹⁰ It is estimated that there are roughly 100,000 refugees still in Thailand and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also estimates that as many as 15,000 have already returned outside the formal channels.

through mother tongue based to bilingual provision, or even having ethnic languages taught as a second language). These demands are correlated with the level of conflict in which they live.¹¹

While some conflict-affected communities (for example, Mon, Karen, and Kachin) have developed very systematic and wide-ranging education provision run by local education departments, other communities have relied on religious institutions to provide language courses in the summer or after school (for example, PaO, Chin).

Most of the major ethnic systems (EBEPs) have their own policies, management, curricula, learner assessment frameworks, and teacher recruitment, training and professional development strategies. A political dialogue aimed at resolving many issues, including decentralization to subnational levels of service delivery such as education was initiated by the NCA between the Myanmar Government and eight ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), but has yet to pay dividends.

The key challenge is that most students attending non-state education institutions have difficulties transitioning to other systems, or having their credentials recognized. Recognition of credentials from EBEP and transfer between systems is one of the most pressing issues for inclusive access to education.

5. COUNTRY-WIDE SOCIAL INCLUSION CONTEXT, PROJECT BENEFICIARIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Basic education in Myanmar faces identifiable social exclusion issues. Evidence points to conflict and remoteness, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, and poverty being important factors affecting access, completion, and learning.¹² In consultations with stakeholders as well as in monitoring and evaluation of existing programming through the DFSP, a more robust picture emerged of the state of social inclusion and vulnerable groups with regard to education. This was taken into account in program design and in assessing risks and making program recommendations.

5.1 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Cost, disability, poor health, and lack of interest are key barriers to access to education, especially for poor and rural households.¹³ Despite increases in the budget for schools, costs such as transport, tutoring, pocket money, and the opportunity cost of jobs (especially in post-primary levels) remain relevant. Poorer regions, such as Shan, Chin, and Rakhine, have lower levels of primary and middle school educational attainment compared with the country average. Furthermore, children ages 6 to 9 in the same states and other states and regions with highest level of poverty, are less likely to attend formal education.

¹¹ South and Lall (2016). *Schooling and Conflict: Ethnic Education and Mother Tongue-based Teaching in Myanmar*. The Asia Foundation. Available at: <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/SchoolingConflictENG.pdf>

¹² MOPF and World Bank (forthcoming); UNICEF. 2016. *Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Myanmar 2016*; World Bank. 2015. *Myanmar Early Grade Reading Assessment for the Yangon region*. Report no ACS13261; Asia Foundation. 2017. *The Contested Areas of Myanmar: Subnational Conflict, Aid, and Development*; Asia Foundation. 2016. "Strength in Diversity: Towards Universal Education in Myanmar's Ethnic Areas"; and World Bank Staff calculations using *the 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census*.

¹³ MOPF and World Bank (forthcoming).

5.2 GENDER

There are significant economic and regional disparities in gender parity in Myanmar, but gender differences in basic education are more significant in terms of cultural norms and discipline rather than in terms of access, enrollment, and dropouts while intersecting at times with poverty, conflict and religion, increasing the risk of exclusion for girls from religious minorities.¹⁴ In poor households, 71 percent of girls complete primary school compared with 77 percent of boys, and fewer girls transition to middle school (64 percent against 69 percent respectively).

Children's access to education may be limited by their families' ability to understand available programs. According to the 2014 census, Chin state has the widest gender gap in literacy rates (16.6%), followed by Rakhine state (13.5%). Rakhine and Chin are the poorest states in the Union, with 26.3% of women of women in Rakhine aged 25 and older reporting no schooling and 35.7 percent in Chin. Kayin State also reported 35.6 percent of women aged 25 and older never attended school.

The intersection of gender and conflict has specific and demonstrable effects on women's educational attainment and girls' access to education. This is due in part to security concerns about girls traveling to and from school in conflict areas as well as due to the provision of teachers and facilities in conflict areas, meaning that schools may be further away or require students to live in another area to attend school. Shan State, an area with high levels of conflict, has districts like Hopan and Makman, where over 80% of women have no level of education. In the 2014 census 49.8% of women in the state overall reported that they had no level of education, rising to 59.1% in rural areas. Shan State has the lowest female literacy rate among young women at 75.3 percent, falling to 51.8% amongst rural women.

According to a recent analysis by the World Bank, religious and gender discrimination intersect to create barriers in education, thereby increasing the risk of being excluded for girls from religious minorities. This is most apparent in Rakhine, which will be addressed separately in the following section.

5.3 DISABILITY

Children with disabilities have much lower rates of enrolment than those without. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),¹⁵ two-thirds of the estimated 232,000 children with disabilities are not in school. In 2014, the census found that only 18.6 percent of children between 5 and 9 years old with disabilities attended school, compared to 71.5 percent of children with no disability.

One of the possible reasons behind the disparity in children with disabilities attending school when compared to children without disabilities is that accessible facilities are still lacking at the majority of

¹⁴ Asian Development Bank, United National Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2016). *Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis*. <https://openaccess.adb.org>; MOPF and World Bank (forthcoming); Montrose. 2016. "Bottleneck Analysis: Gender Dynamics Affecting Participation in Secondary School Education in Myanmar and Implications for Social Cohesion", prepared for UNICEF

¹⁵ UNICEF (2016). *Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Myanmar 2016*. UNICEF: Yangon, page 29–31.

schools. Disabled children in school mostly attend special schools managed by the Department of Social Welfare or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

5.4 RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

According to the 2014 census 79% of people in Chin state are living in rural areas, but barely a third of the population has a motorbike and less than 1% have a car or truck. Only 40% of the population has completed education higher than primary school. As the state is largely rural, and less than a third have a motorbike, commutes to school can be long and difficult.

Remote townships have a shorter supply of schools, especially at the post-primary level and distances between schools may be greater. Thus, remoteness is also a factor in teacher retention and effectiveness of TEOs, school clusters and mentorship schemes as school and MOE personnel have to travel further distances at a larger expense to cover the same amount of schools.

5.5 CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS

Myanmar has been more deeply affected by subnational conflict than any other country in Southeast Asia. Subnational conflict impacts more than one-third of the country's 330 townships. Many of the conflicts have persisted for over six decades. Thousands have been killed, thousands are displaced every year, and many more are adversely affected by ongoing and periodic flaring up of fighting and conflict. The conflicts are driven by a national contest between military and civilian rule for equal rights and for a federal rather than a centrally controlled state. Conditions on the ground vary over small distances, and violence often involves a range of armed groups. Conflict is generated by competing local demands for control of territory, authority over the population, and access to resources.¹⁶

Humanitarian needs in Myanmar are driven by multiple factors including armed conflict, inter-communal violence, and vulnerability to natural hazards. The situation is aggravated by chronic poverty, protracted displacement, food insecurity, limited social support networks, and underlying inequalities including statelessness, segregation, discrimination, and gender disparities that exacerbate the needs, vulnerabilities and marginalization of people in many parts of the country. Civilian populations in Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine and Shan states—the conflict-states identified by Myanmar's Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 (HRP 2020)—are particularly exposed to significant protection risks that threaten their dignity, physical and mental wellbeing, and living standards. More than 985,000 people in Myanmar need humanitarian assistance. Of these, some 864,000 people are experiencing critical problems related to physical and mental wellbeing, and approximately 973,000 are suffering from critical problems related to living standards. Relevant for the education sector, conflict-affected areas in Myanmar continue to be affected by displacement, lack of security in traveling to/from school, and lack of qualified teachers due to security concerns.

Townships in Rakhine state are the most severely affected among conflict-affected states (although all locations have pockets of extreme need).¹⁷ Rakhine suffers from underdevelopment, intercommunal

¹⁶ Asia Foundation. 2017. *The Contested Areas of Myanmar: Subnational Conflict, Aid, and Development*

¹⁷ The humanitarian situation in Rakhine State has deteriorated significantly since August 2017, when security operations by the

conflict, and lingering grievances toward the central government. It has seen multiple rounds of conflict in recent decades, most recently in August 2017 when deadly violence led to the forced displacement of more than 730,000 Muslims into Bangladesh. Overall, the most extreme/severe needs across sectors are concentrated in areas with a large number of IDPs and stateless people (in Rakhine) and/or in areas of ongoing armed conflict. An estimated 600,000 Muslims currently remain in Rakhine.

More than 273,000 displaced people (about 70 percent of whom are women and children) remain in camps or camp-like situations in Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine and Shan. This includes over 97,800 people in Kachin, 9,600 in Shan, 10,600 in Kayin and 1,000 in Chin. It also includes about 128,000 mostly stateless IDPs in Rakhine displaced by inter-communal violence in 2012 as well as close to 32,000 people displaced due the escalation of conflict between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army in January 2019. The impact of this protracted displacement is compounded by movement restrictions, especially in Rakhine, that continue to limit access to livelihoods and essential services such as education and healthcare, deepening vulnerability and dependence on humanitarian aid.¹⁸

Children in conflict-affected areas face multiple challenges in accessing education. In Kachin, Shan and Chin states, while girls and boys in government-controlled areas are able to enroll in government schools, challenges including overcrowding, limited availability of teaching and learning materials, and the lack of multi-lingual education using children's first language remain. These first two challenges are even more pronounced in non-government controlled areas. In Rakhine, the security situation affects access to quality and inclusive education for children in IDP camps (because of the protracted crisis since 2012), children affected by the escalation of conflict in 2017 in northern Rakhine, as well as children displaced by the ongoing conflict between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army. Further, ongoing movement restrictions mean that many stateless children are only able to access primary education within NGO-supported temporary learning classrooms (TLCs) in camps or in community schools.

While delivering education services to children in conflict-affected areas has always posed a challenge to MOE, education delivery and access have been disproportionately affected in these areas due to COVID-19 as a result of health and safety concerns, travel restrictions, limited internet reach, and physical space limitations in the teaching-learning physical facilities.

The activities under the AF to IAQE are targeted at conflict-affected areas. Current armed conflicts may continue or expand, and new conflicts could emerge and lead to difficulties in implementation and reaching the most marginalized children in these areas, and sufficiently monitor implementation. The project will rely on proven activities, providing timely and adequate support to schools and TLCs in areas (IDP camps and host communities) where internally displaced families have temporarily relocated so that children can continue their education. The nature of the support is based on the understanding and adaptation of the intrinsic challenges that exists, operating in conflict environments.

Myanmar Armed Forces, in response to armed attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, caused an exodus of more than 740,000 refugees to Bangladesh.

¹⁸ Humanitarian Needs Overview Myanmar; issue December 2019

5.6 MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE

Language competency has been identified as a factor in ethnic students leaving school as they are less successful in winning scholarships due to the language barrier and may have difficulties following in class and completing assignments at higher levels.

DBE is already recruiting and deploying local teaching assistant of different nationalities to support ethnic students enrolled in basic education schools. The DAE has outlined plans to adopt a similar strategy for the NFPE program. Ensuring that ethnic students, whose first language is not Myanmar, are supported in developing their mother tongue language, while at the same time acquiring adequate Myanmar language skills, to meaningfully progress, potentially to the formal school system, with the appropriate accreditation will be a key feature of the SQASF and Alternative Education-QASF.

5.7 CHILD PROTECTION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Child protection. Myanmar ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Myanmar is also a signatory to the *2013 Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN*. In July 2019, Myanmar enacted the Child Rights Laws in order to align its national legislation with the rights and protections provided in these international commitments. The Child Rights Law defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 and provides a comprehensive structure of fundamental rights for children in Myanmar. The law defines the minimum age of marriage as 18 years and the minimum age of employment as 14; prohibits all forms of violence against children; and shifts the legal framework from a punitive juvenile system to a more child-centered and rehabilitation-based system.

Despite these positive legal developments, child protection in Myanmar faces challenges due to conflict, natural disasters, poverty and certain cultural norms and social attitudes. There is limited data, especially at the school level and at early ages. Violence, abuse and exploitation of children are difficult to measure, as they are often hidden within the family and community, and exacerbated by gender inequity and marginalization of the poor and ethnic groups, in both urban and rural environments. According to data collected by Save the Children:¹⁹

- Nearly 20% of girls are married before the age of 18.
- Adolescent girls (15-19 years) are less likely to disclose the violence they experience or seek help compared to adult women.
- 13% of children under age 5 are left alone or in the care of another child younger than age 10.

Hitting or similar physically violent punishment is prevalent in schools, and may be cause for dropping out of school.

The child protection infrastructure, which includes social work, law enforcement, justice systems and community awareness, is limited. There are some organizations working on ensuring that children are protected from violence, neglect and exploitation. UNICEF, for instance, has a child protection program

¹⁹ Save the Children: <https://myanmar.savethechildren.net/what-we-do/child-protection>. Accessed in September 2020.

aimed at strengthening policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, enhancing capacity of law enforcement and justice systems to provide child friendly and gender-sensitive approaches when working with children, and improving access to community-based child protection services. Save the Children's child protection program focuses on children in urban areas and areas affected by conflict.

Gender-based violence. Myanmar acceded to Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1997. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Myanmar is also a signatory to a number of ASEAN regional commitments, including the *2004 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN region*, and the *2013 Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN*. At the national level, a comprehensive *Bill on Protection and Prevention of Violence Against Women* (PoVAW) has been developed. The bill, spearheaded by the Gender Equality Network (GEN), UNFPA, and the Attorney General, introduces key definitions of sexual and gender-based violence; includes provisions such as comprehensive definitions of rape (including marital rape), consent, marriage, inheritance, and divorce; and incorporates a survivor-centered approach. The PoVAW Bill was presented to the Union Attorney General's Office in early 2018.²⁰ Even though this bill has been in development since 2013, it has yet to be approved by the Parliament. Rape and sexual harassment are prohibited under the Penal Code (1860), but the legal definition of sexual harassment does not include penalties for sexual harassment in the workplace including physical, mental, and verbal forms of harassment.

Overall, gender-based violence and sexual harassment are not commonly discussed and/or clearly understood in Myanmar. There have been some GBV-related studies conducted recently but data remain very limited. However, the 2016 Ministry of Health and Sports Demographic and Health Survey²¹ found that 15% of women have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 3% have never experienced sexual violence. Another survey done in 2017 by UNDP and the National Network of Rural Women found that 32% of the respondents had been abused in the past month, of these 13% had suffered from sexual abuse, 61% from emotional or physical violence; in 38% of the cases the abuser was the spouse/partner, in 22% of the cases it was a stranger, 15% an employer or authority figure, and in 35% of the cases a family member or familiar person. 20% of the incidents took place outside the home, and 11% at home. In most cases the victims did not seek medical assistance, contact a religious leader or other form of authority.²²

While there is legislation addressing sexual harassment, both men and women do not report the cases to police or authorities. Additionally, more than one-third (37%) of women who experience physical or sexual violence have never sought help or told anyone about the violence. Only 1% of women who seek help after physical or sexual violence go to the police. Help seeking is substantially lower among younger women age 15-19; only 8% in this age group have ever sought help to stop the violence, as compared with 22-29% in other age groups. Among women who have experienced physical or sexual violence and sought help, the most common source for help was their own family (53%). The second most common source was neighbors (27%). In general, accessibility to services for survivors is very poor and this is a nationwide

²⁰ World Bank (2018) Myanmar Country Gender Action Plan FY 2019-2020.

²¹ Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) and ICF (2017) Myanmar Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16. Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, and Rockville, Maryland USA: Ministry of Health and Sports and ICF.
https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR324/FR324.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2i0wvXoBErB06RbGKUGE9SYuxXsCmqsfj_VsLsg0-Fx_kNMqYLr4rHtJE

²² UNDP/National Network of Rural Women (2017) Survey on Violence Against Women (powerpoint)
UNW EVAW database. <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/myanmar>

problem. In Yangon and Mandalay, services for survivors are available but are scattered, whilst in other areas, services are extremely limited or don't even exist.²³

6. RAKHINE STATE

As stated in Kofi Annan Advisory Commission report²⁴, “Rakhine State suffers from a pernicious mix of underdevelopment, intercommunal conflict, and lingering grievances toward the central government”, of which the latest humanitarian crisis is only one manifestation. All communities harbor deep-seated fears of the others, resulting from current and past violence and segregation, and are marked by chronic poverty as well as living standards and human development outcomes well below the national average.

Communal tensions and nationalist sentiment have recently grown spilling over into violence in Rakhine State (in 2012, 2016, and 2017), and elsewhere in the country, deepening social fracture and causing widespread internal and international forced displacement. In August 2017, there was a major humanitarian crisis with the outflow of the Muslim population (an estimated 727,000 people) crossing the border into Bangladesh where they remain in refugee camps. The violence and resultant exodus left whole villages empty or with severe population loss and their date of return is unknown.

The violence and outpouring of refugees into Bangladesh beginning in August 2017 was the most recent bout of conflict in the region. More than 120,000 have been internally displaced and remain in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) since 2012 when inter-communal violence led to the torching of thousands of homes and deaths of over 150 people. Tensions between the Muslim and the majority Buddhist Rakhine, coupled with official restrictions on movement of Muslim and security concerns have resulted in limited access to education statewide, but particularly so in majority Muslim villages. Ongoing conflict between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army (AA) which intensified in January 2019 has resulted in further armed conflict in the northern part of the state, displacement of 5,000 Rakhine and a return to landmine use.²⁵

While all communities in Rakhine are deprived and suffer the effects of violence and chronic poverty, statelessness and prolonged discrimination have made the Muslim community particularly vulnerable. The Muslims in Rakhine have been denied citizenship and political representation in Myanmar and are the largest community of stateless people in the world. Muslim IDPs are almost entirely deprived of freedom of movement while other Muslims – and to a certain extent some Rakhine – are also confronted with official and unofficial movement restrictions as well as high travel costs due to corruption. Moreover, all communities often choose to limit their own movement out of fear and safety concerns.²⁶

²³ GEN (2018) Service Provision for Gender-Based Violence Survivors in Myanmar.

²⁴ Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. 2017. *Towards a Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous Future for the people of Rakhine* (final report).

²⁵ Moe Myint. 2019. “Three Villagers Shot Dead in Fighting Between Gov’t, AA Troops in Rakhine”, *The Irrawaddy*, 15 January Available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/three-villagers-shot-dead-in-fighting-between-govt-aa-troops-in-rakhine.html>

²⁶ Advisory Commission on Rakhine State (2017).

6.1 POVERTY AND EDUCATION

Rakhine is among the worst performing states and regions in human development outcomes. Poverty in Rakhine was found to be double the national average in 2010. Using the latest state/region numbers from the Government, nearly one in two people were classified as poor in Rakhine (43.5 percent), compared to one in four in the overall population (25.6 percent). The depth of poverty was also found to be more severe than in other parts of Myanmar. Given the high poverty rate and its large population relative to other states and regions, Rakhine hosts more than 10 percent of Myanmar's poor.

Rakhine's education outcomes fall below the national average, partly a reflection of the high poverty rates and low adult literacy and numeracy. The share of literate adults to the total population in Rakhine is slightly lower than the country average with 86.8 percent of adults ages 15 or above report being able to read in Rakhine, compared to a national average of 88.9 percent. In a five-year low, in 2016-2017 only 16 percent of students passed the matriculation exam.

6.2 ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

Before August 2017, BMY had 595 schools serving 205,000 students and the rest of the state had 2,574 schools and 425,000 students. Detailed information on ethnic background of students and teachers is unavailable. However, it is estimated that 90 percent of Maungdaw schools are in Muslim communities (25 percent in Yathedaung and 50 percent in Buthidaung). Furthermore, comparison between school-level (EMIS) and census data show important discrepancies resulting from the non-coverage of Muslim in the census from which one can estimate that about 93 percent, 86 percent, and 29 percent of those enrolled in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Yathedaung respectively are Muslim.²⁷

Because of the crisis in Rakhine, more than 70 percent of schools and all three BMY TEOs closed at the time of the events and started reopening in October 2017. As of February 2018, all three TEOs were back online and 324 out of the 424 closed schools had reopened, serving 60,000 plus students with a total of 2,055 educational personnel (teachers and administrators). Limited data is available to assess the inclusiveness of access and practices in schools that reopened and deploying qualified teachers to certain areas is difficult and likely to affect the quality of service offered.

Anecdotal evidence however indicates that many schools are open only for a few hours in a day (most likely because of teachers living far away from the village due to security concerns and having to shuttle back and forth) and that some schools are not accepting enrollment of Muslim students, justifying the decision based on security risks. Of the almost 142,000 Muslim students in school in Rakhine state, only 5,186 are enrolled in high school.

6.3 GENDER

²⁷ This is different from estimating the percentage of Muslim children that are enrolled in school. The data available to do so is not currently available.

In Rakhine State, more than half of 10–15 year-olds are out of school (57 percent of girls and 49 percent of boys).²⁸ The gender gap in literacy seen in the adult population across all states and regions, continues to be seen among youth in Rakhine, in contrast to other states and regions (apart from Kayin) where this gap has closed. Contrary to the situation nationally where there is almost gender parity in school attendance, there is a 6 to 15 percentage gap for girls in Rakhine’s middle and high schools.²⁹ Primary, middle, and high net total enrolment rates are below the national average in Rakhine.

Muslim girls in Rakhine state have significantly lower chances of being enrolled in school than Muslim boys at all levels of education. This is most pronounced in the upper grades. Of the Muslim students enrolled in high school in Rakhine, less than 1/4 are female. At the middle school level, the rate of girls in school in the Muslim population is just over 1/4 of the total Muslim students, and in elementary school it is 42%. Only 16 Muslim girls from Maungdaw and 62 girls from Buthidaung sat the matriculation exam in 2018. Passing the exam is required for entrance to Myanmar universities.

7. POTENTIAL PROJECT RISKS AND IMPACTS

Potential risks and impacts were identified by stakeholders in the preparatory design consultations in 2017-2019 and in periodic monitoring and evaluation (M&E), spot checks, and SAs of existing programming under the DFSP and IAQE. As much as possible program design has focused on mitigating the identified risks.

Potential risks and impacts associated with small civil works. The rehabilitation, renovation, and expansion of the existing schools raise construction site management, occupational health and safety, and community health and safety risks during construction. Most of the small civil works are expected to have low or moderate environmental risks associated with dust and noise, waste generation, as well as operational health and safety (OHS). The project does not fund any activities that will generate any medical waste. Workers may pose increased transmission risk of COVID-19 to surrounding communities if precautions are not taken. The environmental risks are expected to be site-specific, moderate and short-lived with low to moderate probability, and severity of harm and can be easily mitigated.

Given that sub-projects will be identified by during implementation and are expected to be small civil works, these risks will be mitigated by utilizing Environmental Codes of Practice (ECOPs) in Annex D of the ESMF. The ECOP, as well as the Labor Management Procedures (LMP) in Annex E of the ESMF, includes COVID-19 sensitive measures to protect community health and safety, such as preference for local hiring, provision of personal protective equipment and hand washing stations, sensitization and training for workers and communities.

²⁸ Asian Development Bank, United National Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2016). *Gender Equality and Women’s Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis*. <https://openaccess.adb.org>

²⁹ World Bank analysis using Myanmar Poverty and Living Conditions Survey (2015) and Myanmar Living Conditions Survey (2017).

Labor and working conditions risks. For direct workers hired by MOE, such as facilitators, trainers, monitoring agents or teachers for alternative education, or contractors and workers at construction sites, there may be labor and working conditions risks such as:

- Terms and conditions of employment of workers may not be consistent with Myanmar legislation and/or relevant WB standards
- Non-discrimination, equal opportunity and equal pay of workers may not be consistent with Myanmar legislation and/or relevant WB standards
- Child labor
- Workplace accidents, particularly when operating construction equipment, when working at height on building construction, and when handling heavy equipment and materials
- Risks from exposure to hazardous substances (dust, cement, chemicals used in construction etc.)
- Accidents or emergencies
- Gender-based violence or violence against children
- Conflicts between workers and communities, particularly if there is influx
- Transmission of COVID-19 among workers or nearby communities, especially if workers are not hired locally and arrive to civil works locations from elsewhere
- Transmission of COVID-19 among workers, especially if COVID-19 specific precautions are not in place at work sites and worker accommodation sites
- Spread of COVID-19, especially if strict reporting and escalating is not in place

The physical construction works are expected to be minor and therefore the associated risk is expected to be limited. For all workers under MOE programming supported by the WB, these risks will be mitigated by the Labor Management Procedures (LMP) included in Annex E of the ESMF. These procedures, as well as the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Codes of Conduct in Annex F of the ESMF, aim to mitigate above risks by (i) responding to the specific health and safety issues posed by COVID-19, (ii) protecting workers' rights in accordance with the objectives of WB's labor and working conditions standards, and (iii) including management measures to manage risks related to gender-based violence and violence against children. As part of the LMP, DBE will put into place a worker grievance mechanism for the upcoming round of school civil works financing, allocated to schools before the 2021 school year starting in May. The grievance mechanism will be put in place to allow workers and other volunteers to quickly inform management of labor issues, such as a lack of personal protective equipment. This timing will allow DBE to include information about the worker grievance redress mechanism in its annual training to MOE staff and teachers before the school year begins,

Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence. In contexts related to program activities (and around school construction sites), there may be a risk that women or children experience serious mistreatment such as harassment, intimidation, abuse, violence, discrimination or injustice. Given that the project will only fund minor construction works, with most workers being hired locally, the risk is not expected to be high in this context however. To manage such risks, all project workers, including contractors, are expected to follow the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Codes of Conduct included in Annex F of the ESMF. The worker grievance mechanism for workers and the broader project grievance mechanism will allow for confidential reporting of gender-based violence and violence against children incidents, with dedicated procedures.

Potential risks and impacts associated with land acquisition. The rehabilitation, renovation, and expansion of existing schools may require minor land acquisition. Any involuntary land acquisition is not eligible for project financing. If the land required belongs to a private owner who may want to donate their land for the project, such land can be acquired under the project as long as certain conditions are fulfilled, including prior and informed consent of the owner. The RPF and the Voluntary Land Donation form in Annex B and C of the ESMF describe the conditions that need to be met before any voluntary land donations can be made,

Risks associated with potential exclusion of vulnerable groups of children, including ethnic minorities, from education services. There is a risk of exclusion of children-affected by conflict, children in IDP camps, ethnic minorities, differently-abled children and other vulnerable children from the education system across the Education Sector in Myanmar, because (i) there may be travel restrictions due to conflict that affect access to schools, (ii) the children may not be able to access quality education due to other factors (proximity to and availability of schools, teachers, and teachers who teach in the mother tongue), or (iii) the children may be able to access ethnic education provider taught schools, but quality or reciprocity/acceptance into the MOE school system may be low. In Rakhine, all of the above difficulties with access are exacerbated. For Muslim children not in IDP camps, there are stricter travel restrictions and lower availability of qualified teachers compared to the rest of the country. For Muslim children in IDP camps, physical access to schooling may not be an issue; but quality of teaching and availability of teachers may be issues. Given these exclusion risks, IAQE and the AF activities are designed to mitigate these risks as much as possible, by targeting the most vulnerable communities and students based on administrative data and inclusive planning. The Community Participation Planning Framework (CPPF) included in Annex A of the ESMF details the measures taken under different programs to target and include schools and children at risk of being excluded as project beneficiaries through multiple mechanisms, including free, prior and informed consultations with communities. For example, preparation of school level social/vulnerability assessments and Community Participation Plans are part of project design for assessing needs and disbursing funds every school year, and are monitored ex-post by third parties. These include specific targeting, screening and monitoring measures in project design to ensure that benefits reach those who are most vulnerable without discrimination. The proposed AF activities are measures to ensure that benefits under the IAQE reach their intended recipients, given the conditions exacerbated by COVID-19 and the increased risk of exclusion in access to education for children living in conflict areas.

Risks associated with decision-making regarding school improvement funding and the school stipend funding. Decision/power over how the school should spend the funding and how the stipends should be allocated to students is delegated to a school committee. As per guidelines and instructions from the MOE, the committee should bring together the head teacher, teachers and parents, and parent members should be representative of the composition of the catchment area and some of them should be women/mothers. Based on available evidence, school committees are on average 35 percent women including female teachers, but this proportion varies, and no data is currently available to quantify the ethnic composition.

Difficulties in having the required representativeness on the school committee may be explained by language barriers, adult literacy rates, gender roles in certain culture/ethnic/religious groups, or economic constraints (unavailability to attend meeting because of job/work). For example, in northern Rakhine

townships, many head teachers of schools attended by both Rakhine and Muslims report having difficulties getting Muslim women to come and participate in school committees. Non-representative school committees have the potential to be captured and to give power (over school resources) to certain groups. As such, expenditures may be better aligned to the need of that group and disproportionately benefit students from a particular population. To mitigate this risk disbursement of SISP and SSP is contingent on school level social/vulnerability assessments and Community Participation Plans, as well as reporting on outreach and inclusive consultations and adherence to a policy of non-discrimination.

Risks associated with expanding funding for NFE and AE. While NFE is included in the National Education Law of 2014, there is no legislation that specifically governs NFE. As NFE and AE programs can be followed part-time, there is a slight risk that their expansion may incentivize families to keep children working or caring for family members at home, or for children to drop-out and work for a few years and finish their schooling through NFE/AE programs later. With SISP and SSP decreasing out of pocket costs for families to have children attend school, this risk should decrease with time as there will be less of a push factor for children to leave school in the first place.

Risks associated with expansion of programs to Temporary Learning Spaces. TLSs are not currently eligible for SSP or SISP support as they are not MOE recognized. Risks around making the TLS eligible for programing include incentivizing/supporting the permanency of IDP camps and current practices including lack of freedom of movement and access to services. TLS in IDP camps for which responsibilities will be transferred to MOE can become eligible to receiving financial and in-kind support if they satisfactorily implement an approved plan for inclusive education service delivery. Among other things, this plan will require strategies to promote social cohesion and expansion of supply accessible to all children living in the camp or site.

Potential risks associated with engagement with ethnic education providers. High-level political support, and will, is likely going to be needed to engage in a constructive dialogue with the EBEPs, not only from the MOE, but also from the EAOs (political and social arm, including EBEPs). As EAO signatories of the NCA have been removed from the list of Unlawful Associations, those that are not signatories have not been removed, legal and bureaucratic barriers to engagement with some groups remain in place. It is uncertain if the political support required to engage in a meaningful dialogue will be granted to all EAOs/EBEPs or MOE.

Furthermore, even with political support, there is a risk that this dialogue may lead to unintended (negative) consequences if, for example, intentions are misinterpreted, or certain groups are/feel excluded. The risk here is not just to the inclusion of ethnic minority areas and children in educational services, but potentially to the larger NCA process. This is particularly important as education was not explicitly part of the NCA but EAO's substantial roles in education are acknowledged in the NCA. Education policy and language of instruction remain deeply related to ethnic conflicts and the peace process in Myanmar.

Collaboration with the MOE should be approached not as a process of EBEPs gradually or quickly becoming state schools, but as a coordinated and collaborative effort to increase access to education. Attitudes toward the type and extent of involvement or collaboration the MOE should have with EBEPs may vary by EBEP or even by local community. Free, prior and informed consultations with ethnic groups will be the core principle of MOE engagement with EBEPs.

Risk associated with 2020 elections. In 2020 Myanmar will undergo the second democratic elections since the transition began. A major election in a nascent democracy during a project cycle brings with it substantial risks as new officials or platforms may not be as willing to implement the programs embarked upon by their predecessors. To mitigate this risk, broad political and community level support for the programs is necessary.

Risks associated with continued, expanded or renewed conflict. Given the challenges around the ongoing peace process and the historical context, the risks that current armed conflicts will continue or expand and that new conflicts will (re-) emerge is important. Increased difficulties in reaching conflict-affected areas mean that a significant group of marginalized children will be left out. The perception of selective targeting of specific groups could lead to exacerbation of conflict.

Research has shown that conflict affects attitudes towards government education and Burmese language education. EBEPs and communities reliant on EBEPs may be less incentivized to collaborate or dialogue if there is continued, increased or renewed conflict.

While the increased funding will largely target formal and NFE (government-provided/financed) services as well as complementary providers, including the EBEPs, monastic, and other religious schools, not all types of education providers will have access to all types of programs. SISP and SSP (in selected townships) may exacerbate conflict since only government schools (and registered monastic schools) will (or are eligible to, in the case of SSP) benefit from this funding while financial needs of non-state schools and their students are potentially important.

COVID-19 Risks. The possible risks presented by COVID-19 have been described in some of the relevant sections above, and are summarized below:

- For school construction sites, there may be risks of increased transmission among workers or communities. Mitigation measures for these risks are included in the ECOP and the LMP.
- For regular schooling and educational programs, there may also be risks of increased transmission among students and teachers. Mitigation measures for these risks are included in AF activities, as outlined in the Myanmar COVID-19 National Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector. These include building temporary classrooms for social distancing, provision of learning kits in case of school closures, provision of remedial education in case of school closures or disruption to access, and preparation and implementation of school-based plans to resume face-to-face classes safely.
- Given the existing risks of exclusion of certain groups or vulnerable children from access to quality education, COVID-19 restrictions or health concerns may exacerbate access and quality issues. Mitigation measures for these risks are included in AF activities (such as needs assessment and targeting of remedial education and additional teachers to vulnerable children, children affected by conflict, children in IDP camps) and the CPPF.
- Lastly, given that the programs are designed to operate based on stakeholder engagement and community decision making, COVID-19 restrictions and health concerns may require that MOE plans for alternative ways of community engagement to large public gatherings. Measures and guidelines for stakeholder engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic are included in the CPPF and the COVID-19 Specific Stakeholder Engagement Measures included in Annex G of the ESMF.

8. FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Consultations with stakeholders and development partners led to the findings and lessons learned found in this Social Assessment. Lessons learned generally and per program proposed for continued/new support are detailed below by theme and project.

8.1 FINANCING

8.1.1. School Grants Program (SISP and SIF)

In terms of access and inclusion, there is low social risk for the school improvement support program (SISP) as all schools in the country are eligible for and receive the grant. There are some issues with implementation and ways in which the institutionalization of the SISP could be done to maximize accountability, transparency and inclusion of remote locations and students, staff and parents with disabilities in particular.

Remote locations are disproportionately affected by varying transportation costs and distances between the township education offices where school heads need to pick up the funds and the communities where schools are located. This leads to costs in transportation and time as well as delays in disbursement. In 2017–18, 254 (out of 330) townships transferred funds to schools on time in accordance with the formula to at least 80 percent of their schools while others experienced small delays of up to a few weeks.

A related issue is that remote locations have higher costs for transportation, labor, purchasing and transporting specialized equipment or supplies – but need the same services and products as less remote locations. This difference in cost is not reflected in the disbursements as the current formula only considers school size, not availability of products or distance. In the coming years, SISP will expand funding to more remote and less well-performing schools in order to increase inclusion. There is a small potential risk here that schools may misreport, or intentionally under-perform in order to receive more funding.

Sanitation remains a major issue even with increased funds for schools. Some schools remain without running water, without access to clean drinking water, without soap, and without accessible toilet facilities. Access for students, parents and teachers with disabilities needs significant improvement and could be improved through the SIF and/or partnerships with development partners.

While a training manual and operational guidelines have been developed to increase inclusion and accountability in the decision-making regarding SISP, there remains room for improvement in transparency and accountability. In 2017-2018 75 percent of schools publicly disclosed SIF amounts and expenditures by category, but there is still room for improvement here, particularly in the inclusion of parents in decision-making with the hope that that will increase the likelihood that children's needs are adequately and equally addressed.

In the 2019-2020 school year, MOE received 44 complaints, 89 feedback submissions and 262 positive suggestions on SIF implementation. Most complaints focused on the financial management of school committees, lack of information about the school improvement planning process, and poor transparency on disclosure of the expenditure. The feedback and suggestions have been taken into account to inform

day-to-day implementation of school activities. Upon receiving the complaints at the school and township levels, MOE ensures that these are investigated by the township education officers, who resolve most of the complaints and refer some cases that are beyond their capacity to resolve to district offices where the complaints are solved. A few cases are forwarded to state/region offices for resolution. The resolution of complaints is then communicated at the local level to stakeholders by the township education officers and the school heads. Of the 44 complains mentioned above, 27 were resolved at the township level and the rest were resolved at the district and regional levels.

The current GRM system is working to some degree but reporting and access could be improved if other channels, with more anonymity, are available. A few complaints of misuse of the ongoing SIF have recently been shared on social media and with parliament. There is no evidence that these are symptoms of a systemic issue, but this will be taken into account in the design of the SQIP. This risk is being mitigated through (a) more targeted training of TEOs and school heads; (b) the strengthening of the MOE's internal reporting system around complaints; (c) the preparation and diffusion of communication material through local radio, social media, videos, and so on; and (d) the piloting of a stakeholder to the central MOE and the MOE to stakeholders complaints, feedback, and communication mechanism (call center approach with a hotline to receive calls and a systematic call/text service to request feedback).

8.1.2. Local social assessments

While there has been marked improvement since the start of the program, more investment is still needed on how to do school-level and township-level social assessments. Monitoring and evaluation reports from existing project components found that the consultations by the township-level committees, while successful, could have improved outreach. Improvement is needed to make the committees themselves more inclusive (particularly inclusion of active ethnic representatives, religious representatives). More work is also necessary to make the consultations broader to include the hard to reach, the poor, vulnerable, and representatives from other potentially excluded groups. Having representatives from religious, ethnic, CSO and other communities would further improve outreach and the quality of consultations. Effective strategies to convert the social assessment into an outreach plan at the school and township level as well as to collect more disaggregated data are needed.

8.1.3. Student Stipends

While generally supported and welcomed by stakeholders, and successful at reaching at-risk students, there are some issues with the existing stipend program and room for improvement.

The existing school stipend program (SSP), while a great improvement on the previous MOE stipends, and generally successful in identifying and reaching at-risk students, continues to have a limited reach, covering a small portion of schools in each township and a small number of eligible students per school. As there remain large numbers of poor and needy students that could benefit from the stipend program, there is significant scope and demand for expansion.

Issues related to data entry of stipend recipients and other systems issues have led to delays in payments to students. It is unknown if this has impacted school attendance for those who received stipends late or had other delays.

Despite improving over time, dissemination of information about the program and the community's understanding of it (especially with regards to the role of the Stipends Committee) could be improved further. Most of the consultations, advertising of the stipend program, and outreach is through the school communities, so the project is targeting parents of children already in school rather than reaching the most disadvantaged. This particularly affects children with disabilities as they may need extra materials or funds to be able to access school facilities (i.e. mobility aids, learning aids), which may keep them out of school currently, and would not know about the stipend.

A remaining issue is that the increase in educational access for impoverished children does not include the most vulnerable as school facilities remain inaccessible for children with special needs. Although the 2014 National Education Law provides for services for children with special needs, none of schools visited in the 19 townships in the 2017-2018 monitoring and evaluation had facilities for students with special needs.

Parental literacy rates and fluency in Burmese could also affect students' access to stipends. In the M&E from 2018, about a third of parents interviewed said they needed assistance in completing the forms. The stipend application process requires literacy in written Myanmar language – this may put certain communities at a disadvantage, particularly female-headed households in Eastern Shan state where the literacy rate is the lowest in the country, or female-headed households in Rakhine where the gender disparity in educational attainment is high. Forms were also distributed to students already in school, so the percentage needing assistance due to literacy or language competency will likely be higher if out of school children are targeted.

Once registered as receiving a stipend, students can use Form C to transfer to schools in the same township – however, transferring to another township and retaining the stipend is difficult. For students transferring to townships where there is no SSP coverage (only 55 of Myanmar's 330 townships are covered by SSP), they will not be able to retain the stipend. With rural-urban migration trends this may mean that vulnerable migrant children are more at risk of losing stipend support if they receive it at all.

Linking the stipend to the condition that students pass the year end exam makes it potentially contingent on paying for extra tuitions as teachers often teach the exam preparation outside of school hours and charge extra for this service from students. This could end up excluding the target beneficiaries – those that could not afford tuition – by linking stipend payments to passing the exam.

While there is a sense of fairness in allocation of stipends, there is a general lack of transparency and clarity in terms of how the process works as it seems to vary greatly across schools and townships. A greater focus should be placed on systematization, including a functioning and accessible complaints mechanism. M&E reports on DFSP also found that there was some confusion regarding the criteria for student selection – that students had to be poor and otherwise deserving (i.e. excellent students).

8.2 CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

A sentiment of favoritism towards Union education (as opposed to ethnic education) could fuel long-standing conflicts which often include claims to locally relevant education in terms of language and

curriculum. To minimize this risk the World Bank is conducting an ongoing preparatory study and working closely with other partners that are financing EBEPs including MEC, EU and ADRA in order to work towards a common goal of promoting partnerships between the MOE and EBEPs. This helps to ensure that EBEPs can continue to improve the quality of their services and receive technical assistance in negotiations and future partnership agreements with MOE. This sort of engagement across MOE, EBEPs, donors, and other partners should be continued so that dialogue can begin from a starting point that is more collaborative than adversarial.

The teacher in-service training and mentoring programs may need to be re-designed or re-evaluated in areas with high conflict risk or ongoing conflict. Some plans for Rakhine state include an alternative meeting location where teachers are uncomfortable traveling to certain areas due to safety concerns. This should be extended to other areas with high levels of conflict risk. Given experiences under COVID-19 of holding virtual meetings, such methods can also be considered as alternative arrangements. However, quality and availability of internet connectivity should be considered as these may be limited in areas with conflict risk.

Continued widespread consultations and extensive monitoring and evaluation in townships with existing programs and townships in the first year of programs will be necessary to assess continuing conflict sensitivity risks and minimize negative impact through program design.

8.3 MENTORING/TEACHER TRAINING AND SCHOOL CLUSTERS

Language of trainings and communication about trainings may be an issue in the implementation and expansion of teacher training and mentoring. This was found to particularly be the case with use of technical terms or new terms, processes or institutions created for the ongoing programs. The risk is that ethnic teachers will be left out or have less rapport with the mentor due to language barriers. The other potential issue regarding language is the question of which language to use in school cluster meetings in mixed ethnic areas to ensure that people feel included and can follow the discussion or training including when there is technical or subject-specific vocabulary.

Budget for mentors who need to travel to their training sites or mentees needs to consider travel time and cost as this varies widely across townships. Additionally, the availability of all-weather roads and the conflict situation can affect access at certain times of year to certain areas. Where possible risk to the mentor traveling in unsafe conditions and risk that the teachers will not receive the necessary training can be mitigated by complementing face-to-face meetings with virtual meetings or assignments.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE MEASURES FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- The MOE should use the local school social assessments to determine the number of disabled parents or children accessing the school or who would like to access the school and what types of

needs are in the area. This data should be taken into account when preparing the SIP and budget to increase accessibility for students and parents.

- The MOE should increase stipends for students with disabilities so that they can purchase learning aids, mobility aids, or use particular forms of transport to/from school. These students could be identified through the local social/vulnerability assessment.

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO SSP FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND PARENTS WITH LOW LEVELS OF LITERACY

- To target out of school children and/or parents with low levels of literacy for student stipends, local assessments and outreach beyond the school should be done by the MOE. This could be achieved through working closely with religious centers, 100 Household Heads, CBOs, NGOs or village heads. Current reliance on TEOs relies on the MOE hierarchy and may not reach households that are not already in contact with the MOE in some way.
- To ensure that parents who are illiterate or with low levels of literacy in Myanmar are able to access applications for stipends as part of outreach to disadvantaged communities the MOE should help schools and TEOs to establish one-stop shops where parents can orally complete the form with assistance and ask questions about the program.

9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MORE INCLUSIVE STIPEND ALLOCATION AND DISBURSEMENT

- The MOE should arrange for stipend payment for students receiving stipends who are affected by migration and move to a township without SSP during the school year.
- Stipend provision should be linked to attendance but de-linked from academic performance so that it is not contingent on passing the year-end exam and continues to reach students at highest risk of leaving school.

9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSIVITY OF SIF AND SISF

- The MOE should require schools to publish SIF amounts and expenditures by category in order to be eligible for further SIF.
- The increase in funding to weak and remote schools in target townships based on performance under SISF should be closely monitored for impact and potential misreporting.
- Development partners should partner with MOE or schools in particular townships or districts to assist in upgrades to school sanitation.

9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSIVITY IN TMCS

- TEOs should arrange for alternative locations for mentoring and clusters under TMCS in conflict-affected areas to increase attendance and safety. This may mean targeting conflict-affected areas for increased CIF support to bring teachers to safe alternative locations or initiating a robust distance or virtual mentorship program.
- In school clusters where there are multiple ethnic groups and languages, including school clusters that include teachers from EBEPs bilingual or multilingual teachers, mentors or ATEOs should be available to assist comprehension of particularly technical or otherwise demanding trainings.

9.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LABOR AND WORKING CONDITIONS RISKS

- Use basic Labor Management Procedures to ensure that labor and working conditions fulfill Myanmar national legislation and WB standards.
- Ensure that all contractors are aware of and trained on the Labor Management Procedures, and they provide requisite training to workers, including on accessing a worker grievance redress mechanism.
- Include COVID-19 specific measures in the Labor Management Procedures to minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission among workers and to communities.

9.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- Develop basic Codes of Conduct on child protection and gender-based violence for all workers working on MOE programs supported by the World Bank (including civil servants, direct workers, contracted workers and community workers) based on the following principles:
 - Treat women, children (persons under the age of 18), and men with respect regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, social origin, citizenship status, property, disability, birth or other status.
 - Do not use language or behavior towards women, children or men that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
 - Do not have sexual interactions with members of the communities surrounding the workplace that are not agreed to with full consent.
 - Refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children.
 - Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labor.

- Revise MOE OGs and training curriculum to include these Codes of Conduct, and introduce training content on gender equality and non-violence, provide training to MOE staff, workers, contractors.
- Establish special policies and procedures to manage serious grievances in the context of MOE programs funded by the WB so that if a stakeholder to the MOE programs (including parents, students, other community members, contractors, MOE staff, workers or volunteers) experiences serious mistreatment such as harassment, intimidation, abuse, violence, discrimination or injustice in a context related to program activities, the person may raise the case, verbally or in writing to MOE.
- Designate and train “grievance counsellors” in MOE to manage such serious grievances.

9.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COVID-19

- In the Labor Management Procedures and Environmental Code of Practice include COVID-19 specific measures to minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission among workers and to communities; ensure that these measures are publicly available and that workers and communities are trained on the measures.
- For programming that requires stakeholder engagement and community decision making, use alternative methods to provide information and seek input rather than large public meetings. Alternative methods may be smaller social distanced meeting clusters or use ICT, such as WhatsApp or Facebook groups.
- Ensure that support in response to COVID-19 specifically targets and addresses access to quality education issues for vulnerable children, such as children affected by conflict, ethnic minorities, differently abled children, children in IDP camps.

10. LESSONS LEARNED FOR SUPPORT IN RAKHINE STATE

The social risks posed by expanding programming and funding for education projects in Rakhine state, and particularly in BMY are specific due to the long history of communal tensions and recent extreme violence, dispossession and displacement. Consultations with stakeholders including development partners, MOE officials and local communities highlighted lessons learned from previous iterations of DFSP in Rakhine and suggestions for future programming including mitigating the risk of exclusion.

SISP, TMCSPP and capacity improvements are already underway in BMY. The SSP will not be extended to BMY in its current iteration, but two townships in Central Rakhine will be selected for universal stipend coverage (all pupils, all schools). In order to reduce risks of furthering conflict or complicity in human rights

and international humanitarian and refugee law violations, and exclusion of particular groups from MOE programs, the MOE needs to pay close attention to the local dynamics statewide and particularly in BMY, and determine how the implementation of MOE programs may influence those dynamics.

10.1 HUMAN RESOURCES

Shortages in teachers, especially qualified teachers, are a major concern. Past and recent violence have dissuaded many non-Muslim government teachers from working in rural areas, especially in majority Muslim villages, and qualified Muslim teachers are scarce.³⁰ As a consequence, especially in BMY, this has led to the widespread reliance on unqualified volunteers and, as such, reduces the opportunity for students to learn Myanmar/Rakhine language, further compounding exclusion and educational opportunities. As the TMCSP is extended in Rakhine it will include teacher training of contract or volunteer teachers in these areas.

While mentors were deployed to all three townships in BMY in 2017-18, teacher mentors are/will not be able to travel to villages with active conflict or where safety is a concern. For example, teacher mentors in these three northern Rakhine townships have already indicated that they are not comfortable traveling to Muslim villages due to safety concerns and this is further compounded by the recent armed conflict. In this situation, mentoring support will be provided outside of the school, in a hub where common security is guaranteed for all participants. In cases where teachers are unable to travel to the hub, support (albeit more limited) from mentors will be provided by phone and through Viber groups or other social media.

The social exclusion risks in Rakhine state require modifications of the TMCSP for the BMY. To mitigate risk of further exclusion, the eligibility criteria for mentoring should be expanded to include long-term volunteers, community or contracted teachers, and unqualified teachers, as well as individuals attending distance teacher education (who are currently teaching or not). The content of the mentoring support should also be modified to meet specific needs of BMY teachers (including issues around language, discrimination, tolerance, human rights). Expanded use of alternative delivery strategies/formats such as workshops organized at the cluster schools or in other neutral locations, phone calls, radio/websites, social media should be implemented. Training and mentoring should be more intensive and targeted (compared to other mentors, given the specificities of the situation in BMY), with training of mentors to deliver and/or organize (if, for example, delivered by local civil society organizations) human rights, conflict-sensitivity, tolerance, non-discrimination and inclusive education training to education officers at all levels, school heads, teachers, parents, and communities.

10.2 FINANCE

10.2.1 Temporary Learning Centers

Muslim IDP children (in central Rakhine) most commonly attend temporary learning centers (TLCs), which generally offer only kindergarten and primary education. However, currently TLCs are not included in the

³⁰ As a result, before August 2017, based on MoE data, BMY townships had the highest pupil to teacher ratios in the country. Internal displacement and redeployment of teachers have since led to the opposite situation, with several teachers remaining idle in their new schools.

SSP or SISP as they are not officially MOE recognized. There are plans to extend coverage if/after they are recognized by the MOE.

Risks around making the TLCs eligible for PT and EGT teacher training include incentivizing the use of IDP camps or potentially making the IDP camps permanent and overlapping and duplicating the work of other development partners (DPs). As it is currently described in the design, TLCs in IDP camps established after August 2017 should not be eligible for WB financial support, even if officially recognized by MOE.

10.2.2 School Improvement Funds

In the coming years, more funding (about US\$1,000 on average) will be allocated to all schools in the targeted townships with higher amounts for the weakest (with regard to achievement of quality and inclusion standards, see more below) and most remote schools³¹ to provide them with the opportunity to catch up with less-disadvantaged schools. This is a change in the previous funding formula which was based on school size. However, in Rakhine there may be other factors or indicators to consider as well.

Outside of the camps, long distances to the closest middle/high schools combined with the official and non-official restrictions on movement leads to high drop-out rates and low completion rates or a reliance on non-governmental institutions that either teach the government curriculum (community-funded schools and monastic schools) or not (madrasas and church schools). This is further compounded by decreased population following the events of August 2017 and school closure. As of February 2018, all three TEOs were back online and 324 out of the 424 closed schools had re-opened. However, a significant number still remain closed, potentially further increasing distances traveled and costs incurred to access education.

The formula for determining SIF in the SISP program may need to be re-evaluated for use in BMY, as significant decrease in population and reliance on TLCs may impact available funding for schools in BMY. While it is hoped that a formula based on larger funds for larger student populations will incentivize bringing children back to school from all communities, including returnees, as the date of return and the number of returnees is unknown, funding based on the current enrollment numbers may not be able to handle the influx of students when and if they return.

Secondly, substantial or large buildings with extensive maintenance costs may currently be home to a much smaller group of students, lowering the available SIF while maintenance costs are likely more or less the same. Monitoring and evaluation of schools in BMY with particular attention to the allocation of funding in 2018-2019 would assist in keeping abreast of challenges related to fluctuations in enrollment in BMY.

SIF 2.0 A disbursement will be conditional on schools accepting enrollment and attendance of all children no matter the citizenship status, gender, ethnicity, religion, or language. This will be especially important when repatriation happens to allow for quick reintegration of returnees in Government (formal) schools as well as in communities serving various ethnic groups. Furthermore, because of the controversial reconstruction³² in BMY since December 2017, BMY townships schools will not be eligible for SIF 2.0 B

³¹ These automatically include government schools hosting displaced children. Discussions are ongoing if/how this will include temporary Learning Spaces in IDP camps.

³² Extension of existing schools which requires acquiring new land will need to rule out “involuntary” donation of land. In BMY, given the lack of information on land use prior to August, ensuring the respect of this rule would be almost impossible.

(major repairs). While this is important in mitigating risks due to potential appropriation of land or dispossession, it may inadvertently delay provision of middle and high schools – through upgrading of primary schools to higher categories - in more remote areas of BMY. This could be revisited on a case by case basis when and if repatriation occurs.

10.2.3 Student Stipends

To mitigate risk of bias in selecting students of only one ethnic group in the SSP in Rakhine, a uniform coverage program will be piloted in two townships. In the two new townships to be selected, the program will be implemented in all schools, supporting all students in targeted grades. The uniform coverage townships, however, will not be in the majority-Muslim townships of BMY. Uniform coverage townships will be selected from townships with residents of different ethnicities and both Muslim and Buddhist populations in central Rakhine state. In these townships, consideration will also be given to include students in grades below grade 5 since data indicate that drop-outs start earlier in Rakhine State and especially in Muslim communities.

While it seems proof of citizenship is not required when registering or enrolling in school, other forms of ID may be required which could be equally problematic, or ID may be requested to clarify name, age, address, etc. Furthermore, without ID cards, Muslim families may not see the point of state education, as they cannot continue to university due to travel restrictions in attending educational institutions outside of their home village. For those who are able to attend university, while they have been allowed to attend professional degrees, reports have emerged that Rakhine State's Muslims are not granted degrees without proof of citizenship, further decreasing incentives to attend and complete education at all levels.

10.2.4 Social inclusion

Rakhine has the largest gender disparity in access to education among children and youth country-wide. In particular, targeted interventions are needed for inclusion of Muslim girls in education in BMY, particularly at the post-primary level. Steps to increase inclusion of girls can be done through the SSP and SISP programs.

Improving conditions of the remaining Muslim population in Rakhine, including their access to quality education, is an important prerequisite for return of refugees. In BMY, social exclusion could be exacerbated if schools in these townships do not immediately receive the needed support from MOE (SIF, in-kind contributions, teachers, and so on) when trying to reopen upon return of refugees or if SISP or SSP funding is disbursed to schools discriminating against certain groups of students. To mitigate risks of discrimination and exclusion, schools in BMY will be subject to the same eligibility criteria as schools elsewhere, but disbursement of SISP and SSP will be contingent on the prior review of the school level social/vulnerability assessment data and report on outreach and inclusive consultations. Furthermore, mentoring in these townships will include a more intense focus on issues around language, discrimination, tolerance, human rights and related trainings will be delivered beyond teacher mentees to SREOs, DEOs, TEOs, school heads, teachers, parents, and communities. Yet, mitigating risks of exclusion may

Therefore, for safeguards reasons, these civil works will be ineligible for IAQE funding (SIF 2.0B).

inadvertently lead to exclusion if measures are not in place to roll-out a rapid response in the event of repatriation.

Adherence to principles of non-discrimination and inclusion will be central to field monitoring visits carried-out in these townships. In Rakhine, the Bank Executed Trust Fund (BETF) will finance the assessment of specific issues around access to education for different populations, the composition of parent-teacher associations and other school committees, impact of segregation of the student population within schools in mixed communities, and inclusiveness of the participation in consultations. Lessons learned and recommendations from this assessment should be carefully reviewed and further embedded in the programs' design and re-design as implementation proceeds in order to minimize risks of exclusion and maximize inclusion of all groups.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RAKHINE STATE

11.1 RECOMMENDATION FOR RESPONDING TO SPECIFIC CONTEXTUAL RISKS

- The MOE should create a rapid response mechanism to conduct school level social assessments and monitoring so that funds, improvements and training are not further delayed to areas affected by Muslim repatriation.
- When and if repatriation occurs in BMY, funding for SIF 2.0 B (major repairs) in BMY should be revisited on a case-by-case basis as schools' needs could change quickly.
- A re-design of the formula for determining SIF in Rakhine to increase assistance to smaller schools or schools in more remote areas or further from a competing high school or middle school, may help to ensure that students are not dropping out due to cost of transportation or fears about security, particularly for girls.

11.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO DECREASE THE RISK OF GENDER-BASED EXCLUSION

- MOE should collect data disaggregated by gender, religion, household income, disability status and ethnicity at the school and township level.
- Where gender disaggregated data shows girls are dropping out of school at higher rates than boys, the student selection process at the school level should lead to more girls benefiting from stipends.
- As we know that gender parity in school enrollment in Rakhine state decreases dramatically between primary and middle school, girls should be targeted in the stipend program prior to the transition from primary to middle school.

11.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TMCSP

- Robust virtual or distance teacher training and professional development modules should be created well in advance of implementing TMCSP. A robust and structured distance training program will decrease the risk that the excuse of fear or security becomes a means of excluding Muslim teachers and by extension Muslim communities from the TMCSP.
- Travel bans in Rakhine state should be lifted for educational purposes both for personnel and students to allow students and teachers to reach schools.
- Bilingual or local teachers should be hired as mentors where possible to fill gaps in competencies, linguistic skills, and increase the practice of non-discrimination.

11.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO DECREASE THE RISK OF EXCLUSION OF THOSE WITHOUT IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

- MOE schools and AE providers should never require identity cards or papers like birth certificates, household registrations or NRCs for school registration, stipend allocation or transfer or promotion to higher grades. If ID is necessary, multiple forms of alternative ID should be accepted. Compliance with this at the school and NFE/AE center level should be monitored carefully and strong actions taken in case of non-compliance.
- As citizenship scrutiny cards (CSCs) are not required for school registration, they should not be required for matriculation or graduation from higher education either.