

Report on Reasons for Out-of-School Children in Select Communities in Myanmar



April 2014

Introduction and Background

Statistics regarding education-related issues in Myanmar varies widely and is difficult to compare across sources. Lack of funding for and investment in public education and an antiquated system as a whole pose significant challenges in terms of access, quality, and retention. According to the Myanmar Education Consortium, school-age children in Myanmar face a number of additional barriers to education: poverty, minority and gender discrimination, direct and indirect costs, language, disabilities, conflict, natural disasters, and the like.

From 2011 through 2012, World Vision Myanmar (WVM) conducted a survey in ten townships where WVM has community-based development programs, including non-formal education programs for out-of-school children. The survey gathered a variety of information including reasons for not going to school, dropping out of school, types of work children are doing if not in school, and the ages when girls and boys drop out of school. The townships surveyed were as follows: YaeNanChaung (Magwe), Chauk (Magwe), Dagon Seikkan (Yangon), Einme (Ayeyarwaddy), Kyangin (Ayeyarwaddy), MyaungMya (Ayeyarwaddy), Launglones (Tanninthari), Palaw (Tanninthari), TayatChaung (Tanninthari) and KawThaung (Tanninthari), covering four regions – Tanninthari, Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon and Magwe.

In May of 2013, an in-depth situational analysis was also conducted in four townships where World Vision Myanmar is implementing a non-formal education program with support from the Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC). MEC is a collaborative effort between the Burnet Institute, Save the Children, and World Vision to address “overwhelming basic education needs in Myanmar” particularly through “the building of capacity of complementary (non-government) education systems and structures including community and school based early childhood development, non-formal education programs for vulnerable children and young people who cannot attend government schools.”

At a time when the Myanmar Ministry of Education is undertaking comprehensive education reform, including a law in draft that promotes the importance of basic and non-formal, continuing education as alternative opportunities for out-of-school children, this report presents the results of analysis of data from both survey efforts, with a primary focus on the reasons for children never attending school and children dropping out of school, and suggests possible areas for further study or deeper analysis.

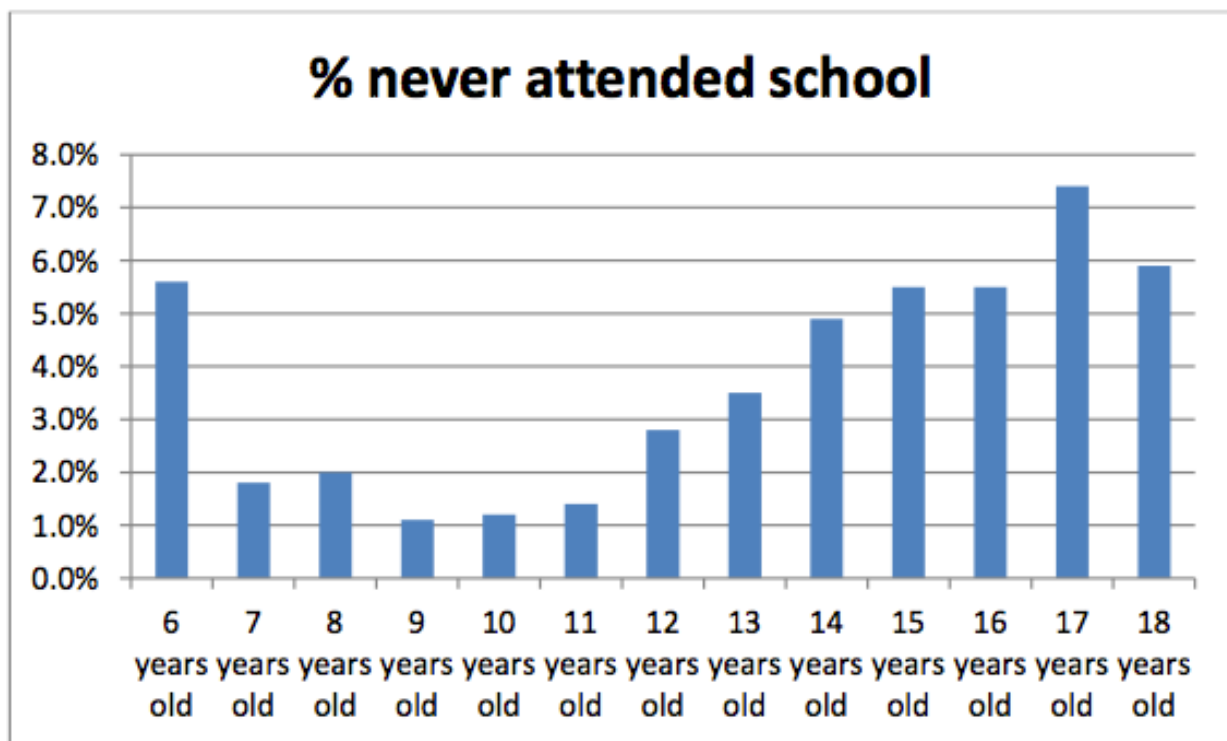
World Vision Myanmar 2011-2012 Survey Results

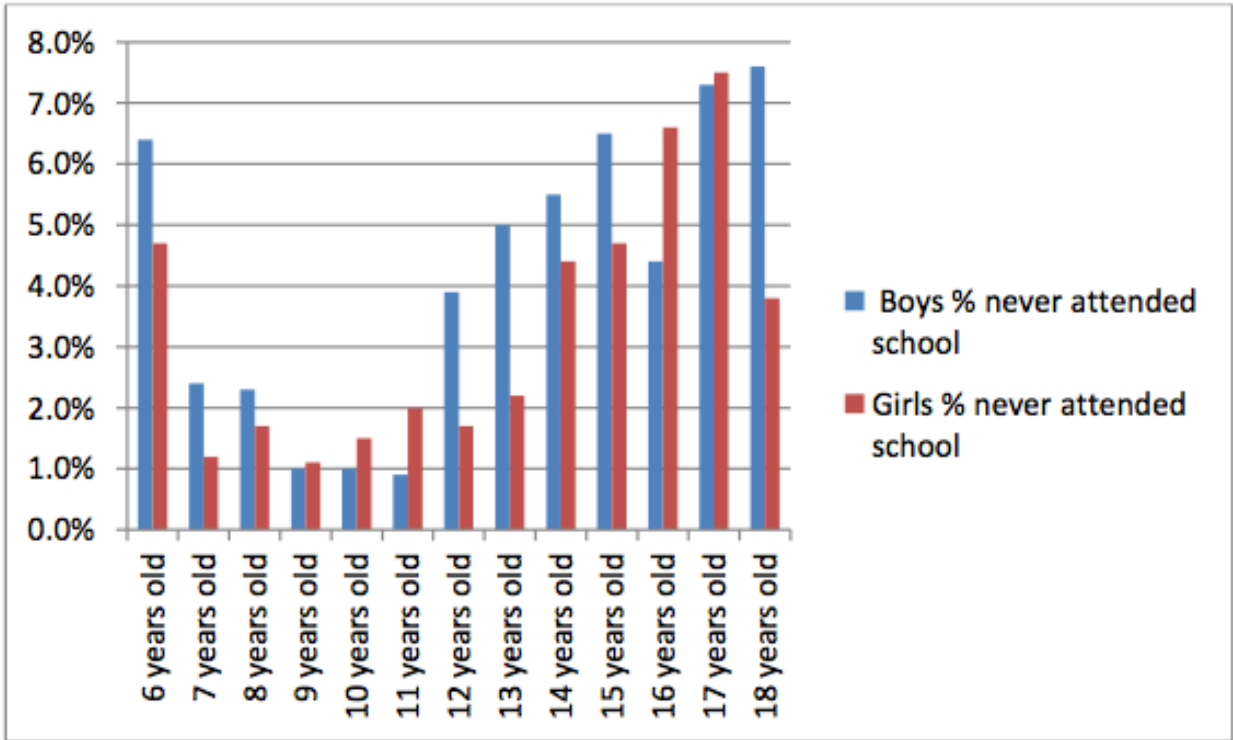
Findings from a survey of more than ten thousand school-age (6- to 18-year olds) children in ten townships in Myanmar indicate similar reasons for children never attending school and children dropping out of school.

Nearly three and one half percent of children surveyed had never attended school. This ratio was fairly even between boys and girls, 3.8% and 3.1% respectively.

Top Five Reasons Cited for Never Attending School

1. Support family business
2. Disability
3. Other
4. Schooling is too expensive
5. Child is not interested





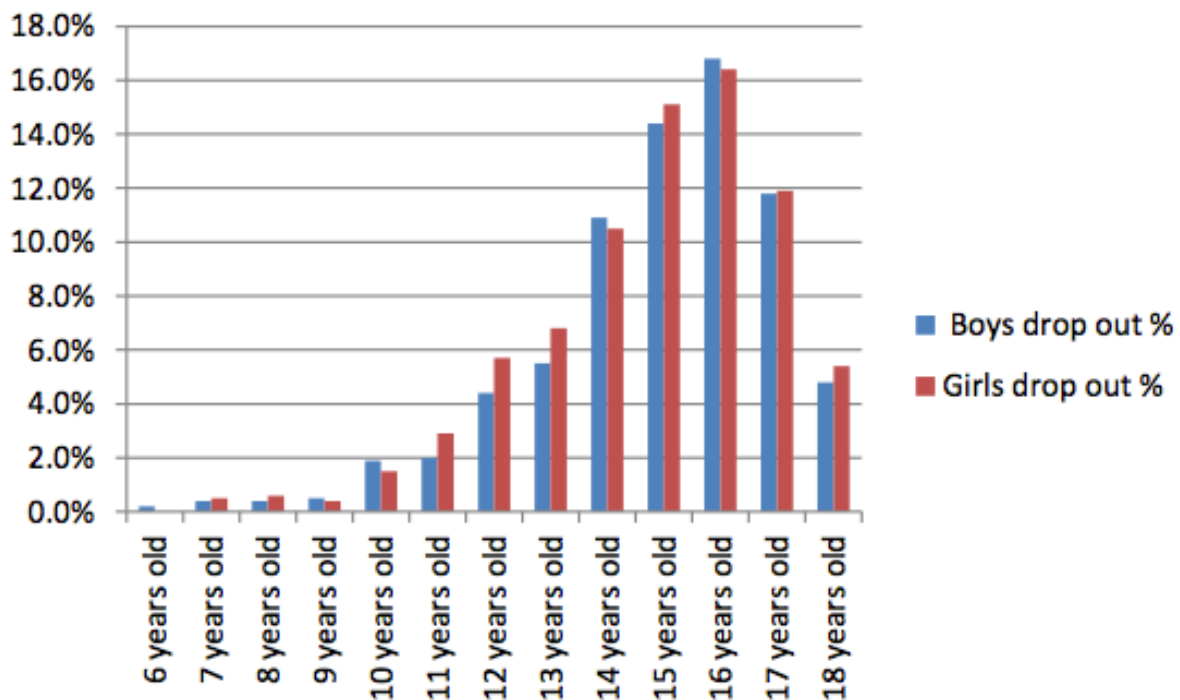
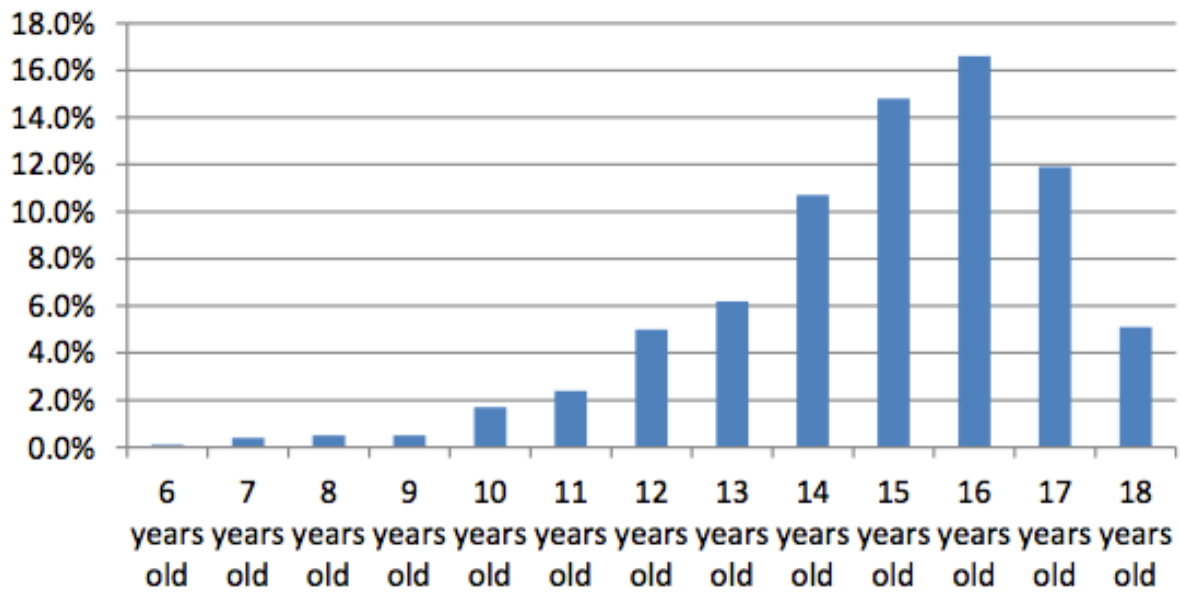
Main reasons for never attending school	% of responses
Support parents	6.1%
Support family business	21.0%
Taking care of younger siblings	0.9%
Working outside to earn a living	9.0%
Schooling is too expensive	12.2%
Poor school facilities and teaching quality	1.7%
The child is disabled, mentally retarded	17.2%
Parents can't bring the child to school	0.9%
School is too far away from home	1.2%
Child is not interested in schooling	10.5%
Parents are not aware of the value of education	1.5%
Teacher is using corporal punishment	0.3%
Child was bullied by other students	0.0%
Child is in kindergarten	0.3%
Others	15.2%
Don't know/ no answer	0.3%

Slightly more than five percent of children surveyed had dropped out of school. This ratio was also fairly even between boys and girls, 4.8% and 5.4% respectively.

Top Five Reasons Cited for Dropping Out

1. Support family business
2. Child is not interested
3. Working outside to earn a living
4. Schooling is too expensive
5. Support parents

drop out %



Main reasons for dropping out	% of responses
Support parents	9.1%
Support family business	27.8%
Taking care of younger siblings	2.8%
Working outside to earn a living	14.3%
Schooling is too expensive	10.8%
Poor school facilities and teaching quality	0.6%
The child is disabled, mentally retarded	6.1%
Parents can't bring the child to school	0.8%
School is too far away from home	1.3%
Child is not interested in schooling	16.1%
Parents are not aware of the value of education	0.6%
Teacher is using corporal punishment	0.4%
Child was bullied by other students	0.2%
Child is in kindergarten	0.6%
Others	5.6%
Don't know/ no answer	0.4%

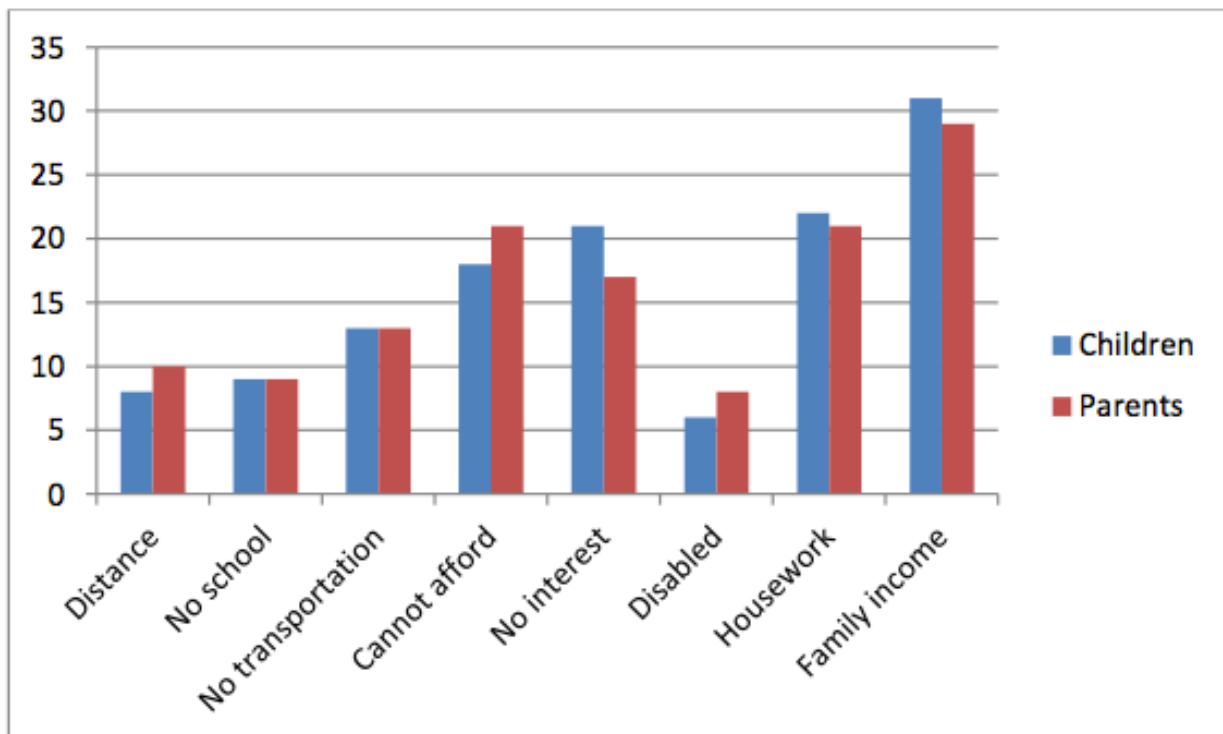
Myanmar Education Consortium 2013 Survey Results

Findings from the situational analysis survey in four townships where World Vision Myanmar is implementing non-formal education programs indicate similar reason for children never attending school and children dropping out of school. Although the survey questions and answer choices were not the same as those in the larger, earlier study, the reasons cited for each are not dissimilar from each other. For this study, children, parents, and community leaders were surveyed separately.

Responses from children and parents mirror each other in noting the same top reasons, in almost the same order, for children never attending school and children dropping out of school.

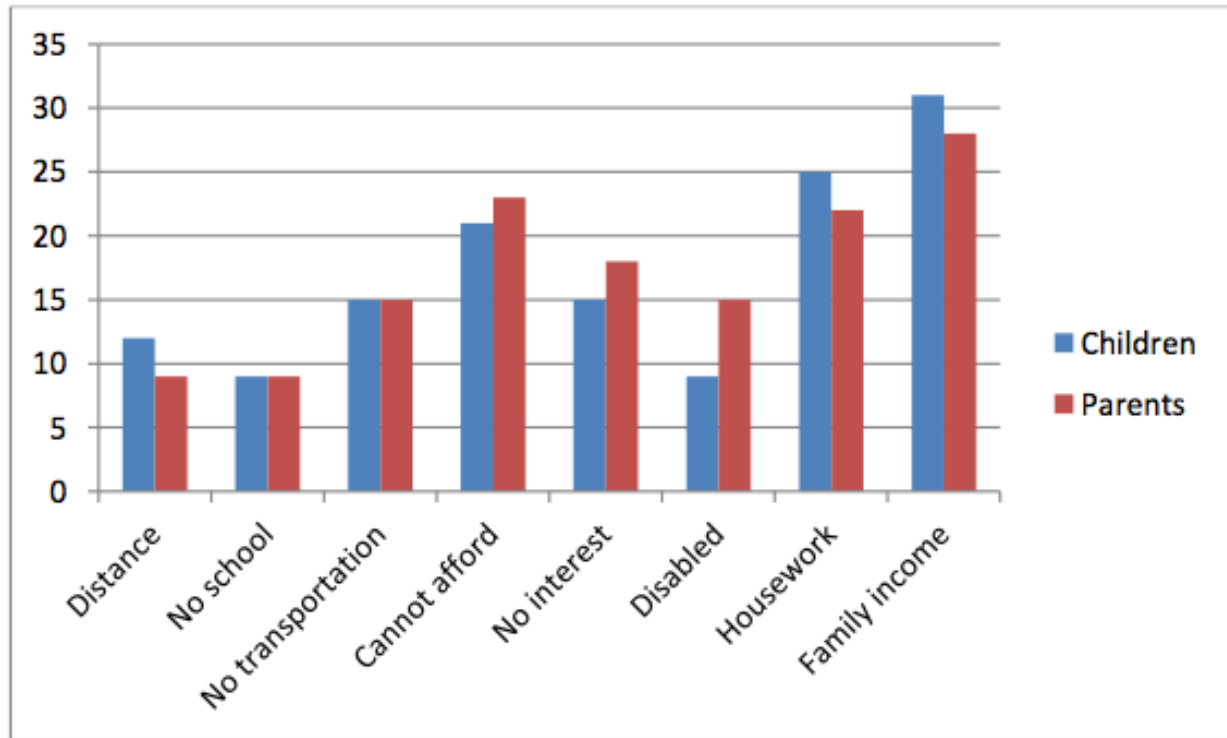
Top Four Reasons Cited by Children for Never Attending School

1. Income
2. Housework
3. Lack of interest
4. Cannot afford



Top Four Reasons Cited by Children for Dropping Out

1. Income
2. Housework
3. Cannot afford
4. Lack of interest



Naung Kwee

Children cited inability to afford schooling and the need to contribute to the family income as the reasons for both never attending and dropping out of school.

Pyigi Yanlon

Children cited the need to contribute to the family income as the reason for never attending school and housework, inability to afford schooling, and the need to contribute to the family income as reasons for dropping out of school.

Thiri Marlar

Children cited the need to contribute to the family income as the reason for never attending school and housework, inability to afford schooling, and the need to contribute to the family income as reasons for dropping out of school.

Htarni (East)

Children cited lack of interest, disabilities, housework, and need to contribute to the family income as reasons for never attending school. Lack of interest and need to contribute to the family income were noted as reasons for dropping out of school.

Phone Daw Toe

Children cited inability to afford schooling, lack of interest, housework, and need to contribute to the family income as reasons for both never attending school and dropping out.

Pyae Pin Sun

Children cited the need to contribute to the family income as the reason for never attending school. Distance, lack of transportation, inability to afford, and need to contribute to the family income were cited as reasons for dropping out of school.

Ward 10

Children cited inability to afford schooling, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income as the reasons for never attending school. An inability to afford schooling, housework, and need to contribute to the family income were cited as reasons for dropping out.

Ward 12

Children cited inability to afford schooling, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income as the reasons for never attending school. An inability to afford schooling and the need to contribute to the family income were cited as reasons for dropping out.

KyaitKhaMi

Children cited inability to afford schooling, lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income as reasons for both never attending school and dropping out.

Wards 168 DSK3, 88 DSK, and 93 DSK

Children cited all options as reasons for both never attending and dropping out of school.

YakyiOo (Ward 12)

Lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income were cited by children as reasons for both never attending school and dropping out.

Tar Ky (Ward 10)

Lack of interest and housework were cited by children as reasons for never attending school. Lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income were cited by children as reasons for dropping out of school.

Padauk Chaung (Ward 10)

Lack of interest and housework were cited by children as reasons for never attending school. Lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income were cited by children as reasons for dropping out of school.

Wargattan

Children cited distance, lack of transportation, inability to afford, lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income as reasons for never attending school. Inability to afford, lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income were cited by children as reasons for dropping out of school.

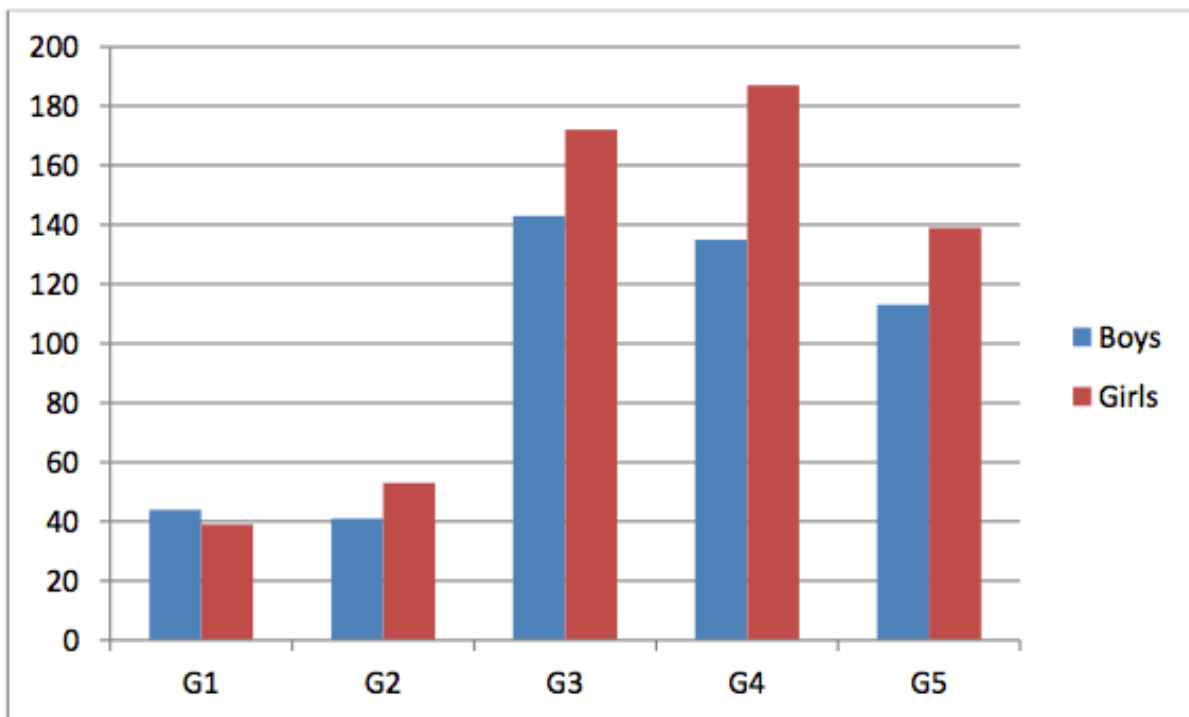
Myagyitan

Distance, inability to afford, lack of interest, housework, and the need to contribute to the family income were cited by children as reasons for never attending school. Reasons cited by children for dropping out were the inability to afford and a lack of interest in school as well as housework and the need to contribute to the family income.

When it comes to dropping out, numbers generally tend to increase by grade and at a higher rate overall for girls, though perhaps not as significantly as might be expected, at least during primary grades.

Drop outs by grade & sex

	Boys	Girls
G1	44	39
G2	41	53
G3	143	172
G4	135	187
G5	113	139



Looking at all grades, as reported by parents and community leaders, girls drop out of school at higher rates than boys across communities. However, while still remaining true, the numbers seem to be somewhat skewed by the highly populated W88DSK community. It is also interesting to note that community leaders report significantly higher numbers overall, across all communities and across most categories. This may be attributed to community leaders having a broader or more encompassing view of his/her area.

The majority of children not in school report spending their time doing housework or contributing to the family income. Most children cited “other” regarding the types of jobs they held while most parents responded that their out-of-school children were working in the family business such as paddy farming or small grocery markets¹³. Children and parents also reported jobs as scavengers and vendors.

Parents and community leaders reported nearly the same numbers of boys and girls as disabled. Disabilities noted included polio, hearing impairment, limping, cognitive delays, eye weaknesses, and seizures. Disability rates reported were not particularly high.

When asked about the future, children said they hope to become skilled tradespeople such as mechanics, blacksmiths, and masons. Some also expressed an interest in becoming professionals such as doctors and teachers. Parents more often indicated that while they hope their children will have a basic education, they want the kids to help the family and secure better paying jobs.

Conclusions & Recommendations

In looking at individual communities in the MEC NFE situational analysis, Wards 168DSK, 88DSK, and 93DSK cite all of the options for both never attending and dropping out. It would be interesting to dig deeper about the circumstances of these communities - are they more urban? are they poorer? - and how that may impact schooling.

Cross-tabulations and cluster analysis might be advised on data for communities that may be selected for additional or targeted interventions. For example, a cross-tabulation between head of household education levels and children's may be useful to determine if there is a correlation between parents' education levels and children's. Likewise, analysis of the presence of NFE programs and community development centers and communities' education levels may be useful. This may be particularly helpful in planning and implementing non-formal or adult education programs from which entire communities may benefit. Further analysis could also look at possible links between other factors assessed in the WVM survey and education.

Boy and girl patterns appear to be much the same but additional information gathering and deeper analysis of data might reveal some interesting nuances. The MEC NFE situational analysis also collected some information from children regarding their hopes for the future. Curiously, while a lack of interest ranked high for both reasons for never attending and dropping out of school, respondents indicate aspirations requiring additional education, skills, and training. Probing further regarding children's lack of interest in schooling compared with their hopes might illuminate some other issues.

There seems to be a perception that disabilities are a major hindrance to attending school. However, data collected on disabilities in the WVM survey is not available and the numbers of disabilities reported by parents and community leaders in the MEC NFE situational analysis are fairly low. Further, disability was not selected as a top reason for never attending school or dropping out by either children or parents in this survey. WVM or MEC may wish to conduct specific study to demonstrate how disabilities pose a barrier to education for children in Myanmar.

Lastly, in-depth interviews with some respondents from each community might be advisable if there is a particular factor about which WVM or MEC wish to know more. Interviews with positive deviants in each community would surely reveal interesting insights.