

Myanmar Education Consortium
BASELINE STUDY
Early Childhood Development Component

DantDaLun Management and Consulting Services
January 2015



Acknowledgements

DantDaLun would like to thank all those who have contributed to making this study possible. In particular, the study team would like to thank the MEC partners who provided the time and effort of their staff to work as enumerators, as well as on the ground support during the data collection process. Thanks is also extended to the MEC team for their flexibility and willingness to provide support when needed.

DantDaLun appreciates the hard work of the study team – Lead Consultants Steven Lanjouw and Choo Phuah; National Consultant, U Win Aung; Team Leaders, Roi Nu, Pyone Aye Kyi and Khin Maung U, and Data Analyst and Statistician, U Zaw Win and Nelie Janssen, as well as the data processing team.

DantDaLun Management and Consulting Services is a Myanmar registered company providing consulting and research services to local and international organizations working in Myanmar and Southeast Asia to accelerate improvements in the lives of the people of the region.

2A/3 Thirimingalar Lane, 7 Mile Mayangone Township, Yangon, Myanmar
dantdalun@gmail.com

Acronyms

CESR	Comprehensive Education Sector Review
ECCD	Early Childhood Development
ECDI	Early Children Development Index
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGMA	Early Grade Math Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
MEC	Myanmar Education Consortium
MICS	Myanmar Indicator Cluster Survey
PTA	Parent Teacher Association

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
Acronyms	2
Table of Contents.....	3
I. Introduction	5
II. Methodology.....	5
III. Overall Baseline Results	6
i. Logframe indicator values	6
ii. Literacy and numeracy levels	6
Literacy	6
Numeracy	7
iii. Household factors affecting children’s education.....	8
Availability of electricity	8
Access to school	8
Parental support.....	8
Working children	9
Mother tongue instruction.....	9
IV. Findings on Early Childhood Development	9
i. Children’s educational attainment.....	9
On-time enrolment in primary school.....	9
Age appropriate competencies	10
Readiness for school.....	11
ii. Education services for early childhood development	11
Access to services.....	12
Learning environment	13
Teaching and learning approach	13
Recruitment and training of caregivers.....	14
Community involvement.....	15
Management	16
iii. Household and community factors affecting early childhood development.....	17
V. Children with Disabilities.....	17

i.	Educational attainment for children with disabilities	18
ii.	Education services for children with disabilities	18
iii.	Household and community factors affecting education for children with disabilities	18
VI.	Conclusions	18
VII.	Bibliography	21
	Annexes.....	22
	Annex A: Baseline values of MEC indicators.....	23
	Annex B: Early Childhood Development Index	25

List of Tables

Table 1:	Attitudes to mother tongue instruction.....	9
Table 2:	Educational attainment for early childhood development.....	10
Table 3:	Children 3-4 Years Developmentally on Track	11
Table 4:	Enrolment in pre-schools by age and sex.....	12
Table 5:	Scheduled Activities in the Pre-schools	14
Table 6:	Children Under-five who have Access to Toys.....	17

List of Charts

Chart 1:	Grade 3 Reading and Comprehension Scores	7
Chart 2:	Grade 5 Reading and Comprehension Scores	7
Chart 3:	Reading Scores by ECCD Experience	7
Chart 4:	Mathematics Scores	8
Chart 5:	Educational Attainment of Mother or Caretaker	8

I. Introduction

The Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC) conducted a baseline study with 12 of its civil society organisation partners in August 2014 to 1) provide benchmarks to assess progress and impact resulting from the project interventions and 2) provide benchmarks to guide project implementation and set project targets. The 12 MEC partners are each engaged in one of four programme components -- early childhood development (ECCD), complimentary basic education in ethnic areas, inclusive primary education for children with disabilities and non-formal education for out-of-school children -- in 10 states and regions across Myanmar. In addition to the overall MEC logframe, a common logframe for the partners working in each of the programme components was developed jointly by MEC and the partners.

The study was a joint baseline for the programme as a whole and a full report of the baseline study has been produced. For the benefit of the partners, the MEC has requested that separate component reports be produced to enable the partners to more easily access the information that is relevant for them. A full report of the baseline study has been produced. This report presents the findings relevant to projects on early childhood development. Consequently, the report provides a summary of the overall findings of the survey (Section III) but focuses on the survey findings related to early childhood development (Section IV).

II. Methodology

The baseline collected data for the programme as a whole and provides information on the indicators for the study areas as a whole. Although not specifically addressing individual partner projects, the study included one project township from each partner organization. For the ECCD component, the survey was conducted in Indaw, Lashio, Kyainseikgyi and Pinlaung townships. Three survey sites (wards or villages) were selected in each partner location (two partners are located in Lashio township). The survey also collected qualitative data on education services available in the village sites for each specific programme component.

The study used the following data collection methods:

- 1) A household survey of households with children 5-9 years
- 2) Visits to existing planned intervention schools in survey sites for:
 - i. observation and secondary data collection;
 - ii. key informant interviews with principals or senior teachers; and
 - iii. key informant interviews with caregivers or teachers.
- 3) A reading and mathematics assessment of students in Grades 3 and 5¹ in primary education schools in the survey sites.
- 4) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or with community members and village leaders.

A total of 879 interviews were conducted in households with children 5-9 years throughout all the townships. Among these, 545 households also completed an under-five questionnaire on early childhood development, and 130 completed a disability questionnaire. Key informant interviews were conducted in 31 schools with 29 principals/senior teachers and 42 caregivers/teachers, of

¹ This report uses the international school grading system. Grade 3 is equivalent to Standard 2 in the Myanmar system and Grade 5 to Standard 4.

which eight principals/senior teachers and nine caregivers were from nine ECCD centers. Reading and math assessments were conducted with 402 children in 35 primary schools including schools in locations implementing projects for ECCD and out-of-school children. In addition, a total of 36 focus group discussions, 15 of which were from ECCD project locations, were conducted with members of School Management Committees, PTAs, parents, teachers and community leaders.

III. Overall Baseline Results

This section presents a summary of the overall results of the baseline study for the MEC programme as a whole.

i. Logframe indicator values

The full list of the baseline values for the MEC programme indicators and indicator definitions for all components are shown in Annex A.

The key MEC impact indicator is Net Primary Enrolment, which is the percentage of children aged 5-9 years who are in primary school. The Net Primary Enrolment Rate in the survey areas is 84.9%, which is comparable to national figures. However, the Gross Primary Enrolment rate (which counts children of all ages in primary school) is 107.8% which indicates that many children in primary school are over-aged. There is no significant difference in the Net Primary Enrolment rates between boys and girls but the rate is slightly lower for children with disabilities (81.9%).

The indicators relevant to the ECCD component are discussed in the Section IV.

ii. Literacy and numeracy levels

Key stage literacy and numeracy levels are a key MEC outcome indicator. Literacy and numeracy levels of Grade 3 and Grade 5 students were determined using a modified Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) tool². The details of the EGRA and EGMA are described in the main baseline report.

Literacy

Reading ability was assessed by giving students a short passage and counting the number of correct words the student could read within a minute. After reading the passage, students were asked to answer 4 questions about the passage. Each question was given a score of 25 for a maximum score of 100.

The average reading scores for all students is 92 words a minute and the average comprehension score is 50. As expected, Grade 5 students performed better than Grade 3 students. However, about 23% of Grade 5 students were not able to read a Grade 3 level text with desirable fluency and only 38% of Grade 5 students were able to get a perfect score for reading comprehension of Grade 3 level.

² EGRA is an individually administered oral assessment of foundation literacy designed as an inexpensive and simple diagnostic of individual student progress in reading (edddata II, USAID, 2014). EGMA is an oral assessment designed to measure a student's foundation skills in numeracy in the early grades (RTI International, 2014).

Overall, the assessment showed that although most students are able to read, many are not able to understand what they read, even at Grade 5. The results also showed that children who do not speak the same language at home as in school have significantly lower comprehension scores.

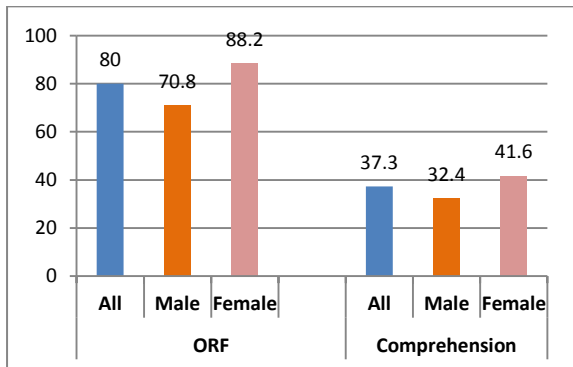


Chart 1: Grade 3 Reading and Comprehension Scores

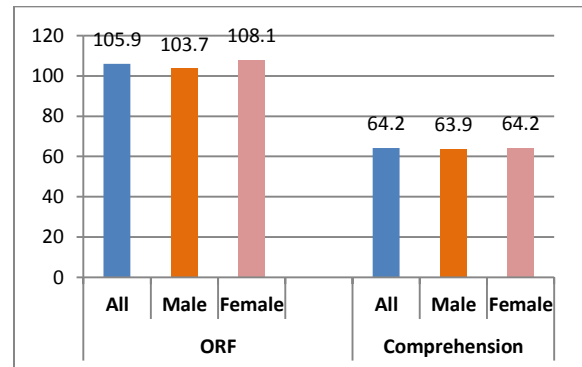


Chart 2: Grade 5 Reading and Comprehension Scores

Contrary to findings from other studies, the results show that children without ECCD experience are better at reading than those who have ECCD experience. There is no difference in comprehension scores. As the survey did not collect any detailed information about the students or the type of ECCD experience of these students, it is not possible to explain the difference in findings.

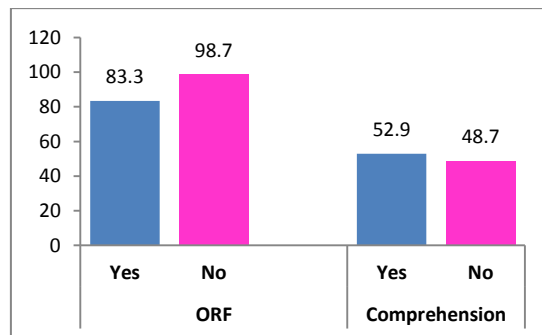


Chart 3: Reading Scores by ECCD Experience

Numeracy

For the mathematics test, students were asked to answer four questions, one each on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. All these concepts are taught in Grade 3. Each question was given a score of 25 for a maximum score of 100.

The mean score for numeracy in Grade 3 is 52.4 and Grade 5 is 70.9. There is no significant difference in scores by gender in both grades. While most students were able to answer the addition and subtraction questions correctly, the majority of students had difficulty in calculating multiplication and division, even in Grade 5. About 70% of students in Grade 3 could not go beyond simple addition and subtraction problems, and only about 34% of students in Grade 5 could answer all questions correctly. Mathematic abilities usually go beyond understanding of concepts, and involve practical application of the concepts; consequently, rote learning which is often used in the Myanmar education system will not help the students to achieve a high level in mathematics.

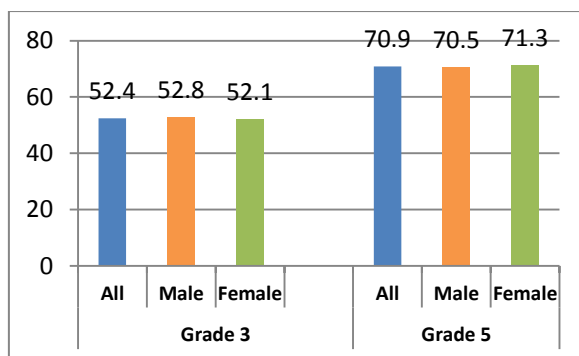


Chart 4: Mathematics Scores

iii. Household factors affecting children's education

Availability of electricity

More than 60% of households surveyed do not have electricity, and of those that do, many have it for less than 5 hours a day. This hampers children's ability to study in the night time.

Access to school

Distance from school is not a key issue in the survey sites. Most households have a pre-school and primary school within 15 minutes from their home. The majority of students go on foot to school.

Parents or guardians pay substantial amounts for children to attend pre-school and primary school even though primary schooling is supposed to be free. This appears to be a key factor affecting access to school for poor families.

Parental support

Educational attainment of the mother or caretaker has been shown to have an influence on the likelihood that the mother will engage in learning activities with the child at an early age and in enrolment in pre-school³. The household survey found that a majority of mothers or caretakers in the survey sites either did not finish primary school or stopped at this level.

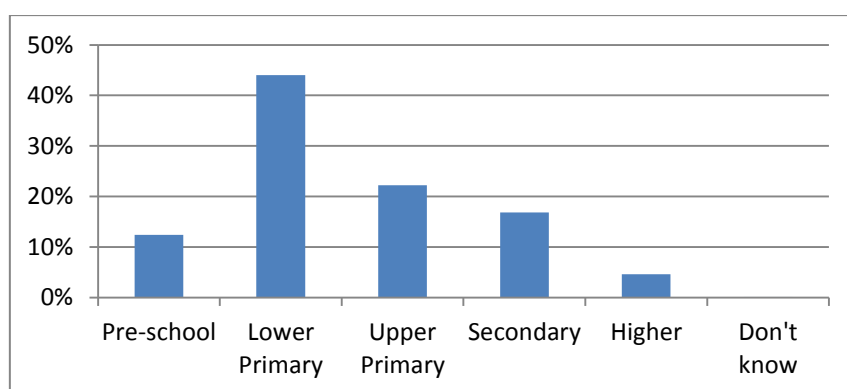


Chart 5: Educational Attainment of Mother or Caretaker

Of the households interviewed only 12.1% have had contact with the school and 8.6% have attended parenting education training. Nevertheless, 89.3% of respondents demonstrated positive attitudes

³ (Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, 2011, pp. 41-42)

towards parenting including rejection of physical punishment, allowing time for play after school and supporting equal opportunities for boys and girls⁴.

Working children

About 63% of children in the survey work in the home. Of these, about 20% spend two to four hours working and 20% work for more than four hours. About 12% of children work outside the home, about half of these for pay and half without pay.

Mother tongue instruction

About 73% of respondents think that it is important for children to receive mother tongue instruction. The question in the household questionnaire was not clear if this referred to mother tongue as the medium of instruction or teaching mother tongue as a subject. The percentage was the same for both households with Myanmar as the mother tongue of the head of the household and those with other ethnic languages as the mother tongue (Table 1). In focus group discussions, many respondents in ethnic regions indicated that it is important for children to learn their mother tongue in school; however, they also recognised the importance of learning English and Myanmar. They noted that the inability to speak Myanmar is a barrier for children in ethnic areas to attend secondary and higher education as they have difficulties to attend government schools and there are not many secondary and higher education schools within the ethnic education systems.

Table 1: Attitudes to mother tongue instruction

Mother tongue of head of household	Percent of households in survey	Percent who consider it important to receive mother tongue instruction	Percent who know of schools that provide mother tongue lessons
Myanmar	30.9%	73.8%	24.3%
Ethnic languages	69.1%	72.2%	69.6%

IV. Findings on Early Childhood Development

Quantitative data from the household survey on early childhood development component was collected from all survey sites. Qualitative data on ECCD centers was only collected in the ECCD project locations in the survey.

i. Children's educational attainment

The indicators related to educational attainment for ECCD are shown in Table 2.

On-time enrolment in primary school

Net Intake Rate in Primary Education is the percent of children in the first grade of primary school (Kindergarten in Myanmar) who are of the official primary school-entrance age (5 years)

Gross Intake Rate in Primary Education is the percent of children in the first grade of primary school (Kindergarten in Myanmar) of any age over the children of 5 years

⁴ At least two of three attitudes are positive.

Table 2: Educational attainment for early childhood development⁵

Early Childhood Development	Boys	Girls	Children with Disabilities	Total	National figures (where available)
Net Intake Rate in Primary Education	48.7%	45.7%	63.1%	47.2%	74.4% (MICS ⁶)
Gross Intake Rate in Primary Education	158.5%	152.0%	200.0%	155.2%	
Early Child Development Index	70.6%	77.4%	86.7%	73.6%	
Percentage of children in Grade 1 who have benefitted from an ECCD intervention	58.5%	62.2%	76.3%	60.3%	39.8% (MICS)
Net ECCD Enrolment Rate	22.3%	23.3%	21.4%	22.7%	22.9% (MICS)
Gross ECCD Enrolment Rate	34.8%	37.0%	28.6%	35.8%	

On-time enrolment in primary school is an outcome indicator for MEC ECCD projects. This is measured by the Net Intake Rate in Primary Education. The Net Intake Rate in the survey sites is 47.2%. This is relatively low in comparison with national rate of 74.4% indicating that a low percentage of children enter primary school at age five. When examining the Gross Intake Rate in Primary School, the figure 155.2% indicates that the number of children in Grade 1 far exceeds those of the official school-entrance age. The mean age of children in Grade 1 in the survey is 7 years with the oldest child already 13 years old. The late entry age is reflected throughout all grades. There is no statistical difference in the intake rates between boys and girls.

Age appropriate competencies

Early Childhood Development Index shows the percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains -- literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning domains

Age appropriate competencies is also an outcome indicator for ECCD projects. The survey used an Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) as a proxy for this indicator. The ECDI is adapted from the Lao Social Indicator Survey and is an indication of the extent to which children meet the benchmarks that they are expected to reach if they are progressing in their development as the majority of children in their age group. The index is calculated as the percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains -- literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning domains (See Annex B for details of the ECDI). The data from the household survey suggests that 7 out of every 10 children are developmentally on track. This corresponds to figures in Laos for children that come from rural areas with limited access, where poverty is high and where ethnic minority populations reside.

The overall index however masks the differences in development among the domains as shown in Table 3. More children are developmentally on track physically and in social-developmental aspects than in literacy-numeracy and learning.

⁵ The figures in red have a higher standard error due to the smaller sample size for the calculation of the indicator. This means that the estimate has a lower level of reliability.

⁶ (Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, 2011)

Table 3: Children 3-4 Years Developmentally on Track

	Literacy-Numeracy	Physical	Socio-Developmental	Learning	Total
Boys	48.4%	82.1%	84.8%	62.0%	70.6%
Girls	52.1%	93.8%	96.6%	72.6%	77.4%
Total	50.0%	87.3%	90.0%	66.7%	73.0%

Readiness for school

Net ECCD Enrolment Rate is the percent of children 3-4 years who are enrolled in a pre-school

Gross ECCD Enrolment Rate is the percent of children any age enrolled in a pre-school

Attendance to pre-school education in an organized learning programme is important for the readiness of children to go to school. The household survey found that 60.3% in Grade 1 have benefitted from an ECCD intervention in the previous year. This is much higher than the figure from data collected in the schools visited which showed only 34% of children in the first year of primary school had attended a pre-school; this figure is closer to the figure of 39.8% from the Myanmar Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of 2009-2010⁷.

This high figure is also at odds with the much lower figures for Net ECCD Enrolment Rate (22.7%) and Gross ECCD Enrolment Rate (35.8%) which indicate that the majority of children do not attend pre-school. The Net ECCD Enrolment Rate is comparable with the national figure of 22.9%. The low ECCD enrolment rate was also consistently noted by participants in focus group discussions who said that many parents take their pre-school aged children with them to the fields for shifting cultivation or during work in rubber plantations. Furthermore, many families are not able to afford to pay the fees for pre-school as the government does not yet support free education for children of these ages although primary school education is free.

It is to be noted that the survey did not define an “ECCD intervention”; in some survey sites, there were community day care centers run informally by the church or primary school. However, these centers do not have proper schedules, buildings, materials or any trained staff. It is possible that these may have been counted as a pre-school by the household respondents.

ii. Education services for early childhood development

Data on education services for early childhood development was only collected in the townships implementing projects on early childhood development. The survey sites for ECCD projects were in Lashio in Northern Shan State (for two projects); in Indaw, Sagaing region; Kyainseikgyi, Kayin state; and Pinlaung in Southern Shan.

Qualitative data was collected from nine ECCD centers in Lashio (6), Indaw (2) and Pinlaung (1). In Pinlaung township, data was collected from one informal pre-school using the caregiver/teacher questionnaire; the school/center data collection form was not administered. There is thus little data available about this pre-school and analysis has been carried out primarily on data from eight pre-

⁷ (Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, 2011)

schools. In Kyainseikgyi township and in other Pinlaung locations, there were no ECCD centers established yet although in some villages, there were informal community day care centers. Data was not collected from these centers.

Of the nine pre-schools visited, four (one in Indaw and three in Lashio) are run by the government as school-based pre-schools and the remaining are community-based pre-schools, one run by a monastic school and four by faith-based organizations.

Most of the locations had predominantly ethnic populations. In Lashio, the communities were primarily Lahu, Kokang and Shan but also included Palaung, Wa, Kachin, Myanmar and Indian populations. Ethnic groups in other townships included Kayin, PaO and Kayan.

Access to services

Eight of the pre-schools visited had a total of 250 children, mainly children of the age of four years (school enrolment data was not available from one pre-school). More than half of the children enrolled are girls.

Table 4: Enrolment in pre-schools by age and sex

Age	Boys	Girls	Total	Percentage
< 3 years	25	25	50	20.0%
3 years	21	23	44	17.6%
4 years	45	79	124	49.6%
5 years	17	15	32	12.8%
Total	108	142	250	100.0%

Seven pre-schools have a code of conduct signed by the caregivers. The codes of conduct include issues of work ethics such as punctuality, procedures for taking leave, working with the committees, and proper appearance of teachers and students. Only two school-based pre-schools indicated that non-discrimination and gender equality are part of the code of conduct for the caregivers.

The pre-schools indicated that they usually accept all children who would like to attend the school unless the children are too young or no more space is available. However, there are no specific strategies or actions to encourage children with disabilities to come to the school in both school-based and community pre-schools. This is because the caregivers do not have any experience of working with children with disabilities. Two of the pre-schools stated that they encourage caregivers to pay special attention to children with disabilities if there are any.

Four of the school-based pre-schools and one community pre-school mentioned that they have written rules and regulations for children's behaviour, and that they are displayed on the notice board. Six also mention that they have procedures for resolving conflicts; for this, they appear to be referring to the disciplinary committees traditionally formed at schools in Myanmar.

All pre-schools are within 30 minutes' walk from home for most of the children. The majority of children walk to school. This information is confirmed from the data in the household survey. The schools usually operate slightly more than the normal school hours of six hours per day for five days a week. Only two community-based pre-schools practise flexible school hours.

All of the pre-schools collect a form of fee or contribution from the families. School-based pre-schools in Lashio collect an annual fee of Kyat 50,000 to 70,000 per year while community pre-schools collect Kyat 1,000 to 20,000 per year. For one school-based pre-school in Indaw, the contribution is rice not money; each household contributes about 3 baskets of rice per year which is equivalent to about Kyat 15,000. The collection of fees is confirmed by information from focus group discussions where the participants indicated that pre-schools collect between 1,000 and 7,000 Kyat per month to support caregivers' salaries and learning materials as the government does not yet provide support for pre-schools although there appears to be an indication from the government that it will do so. The fees are a barrier to attending pre-school for some poorer community members. The school-based pre-schools have no policy on fee exemption: everyone has to pay. However, three community-based preschools practice fee exemption policy for poor children and in the 2013-14 school year, a total of eight children were exempted from fees in two of these schools. The higher fees are charged by the three school-based pre-schools in Lashio which likely cater to better off families in the urban/peri-urban areas. One of these pre-schools has been recently nominated the best ECCD center in Lashio raising the question of the need for additional assistance.

Learning environment

The majority of the pre-schools have only one classroom housed in a larger building. One community-based pre-school is in a temporary building and in the focus group discussions, the participants noted that some parents do not send their children to the school because they feel the building is not secure. Half of the ECCD classrooms are accessible for children with disabilities. Only about half of the pre-schools have adequate furniture and proper bedding for the children.

Five pre-schools mentioned that children bring their own drinking water in bottles. For three school-based pre-schools in Lashio where children do not bring water from home, the main water source is tube-wells and wells, and water is usually treated through boiling or using a water filter. Drinking water is properly stored but cups are not available for each child. Most of the pre-schools have no special arrangements to provide drinking water for children with disabilities since they do not have children with disabilities in their schools.

The data shows that the ratio of students per toilet is around 9 to 1 but in most cases, the children have to share toilets with older children from primary grades. Only two schools have their own toilets, separating boys and girls. Most of the pre-schools mention that they have hand-washing facilities and while water is available most of the time, it is not clear if soap is available in the facilities. None of the pre-schools provide for accessibility to those facilities by children with disabilities.

Teaching and learning approach

Almost all the pre-schools have a timetable or activity schedule and at only one school the children do not work according to the schedule. For all these schools, the schedule balances between different types of activities. Table 5 shows a summary of different routine and learning activities commonly seen in those pre-schools.

Seven pre-schools have inside learning corners with creative materials, blocks and books. Six pre-schools have learning corners with imagination and games and four centers have learning corners with music. Five pre-schools have external learning corners with sand activities, four pre-schools have free play and creative play and three pre-schools (which is less than half of the centers) have

water play activities, swings and movable play materials. Out of the eight pre-schools for which data is available, five have playgrounds but only one playground in a community-based pre-school is properly prepared and safe to use throughout the year and it is also the only playground which has play equipment.

Table 5: Scheduled Activities in the Pre-schools

<i>Routine Activities</i>	<i>Specific Learning Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting • Prayers • Meditation • National anthems • Attendance list • Refresh for the whole week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciting poems, singing songs and dancing • Games and play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outdoor play ○ Group play • Story-telling • Painting • Reading and writing • Specific lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiffin time, food (snack) • Rest (sleep/nap) • Health and cleaning 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily evaluation • Closing prayer 	

All the pre-schools except one make use of learning materials in the classroom, but only one school-based pre-school has enough materials. The type of play and learning materials used range from real objects and picture cards created and collected by the caregivers to commercially available materials such as storybooks and picture books, posters, woodblocks, jigsaws and dice games, various toys, and raffle games. Only two school-based pre-schools adapt the materials to children with disabilities.

Only three centers keep records of children’s progress. At four centers they assess children’s progress once a month and at four other centers they do this as needed. The assessment is generally done through observation of children's behaviour and performance in the school. According to the caregivers, the assessment covers a wide range of areas such as language ability, creativity, communication, social interaction, participation, autonomy, health and physical growth, and discipline. However, none of the pre-schools seem to use a specific assessment tool to monitor the progress of children systematically.

Recruitment and training of caregivers

On average, the caregiver-children ratio is 1 to 13. Each pre-school has at least two caregivers except one school-based pre-school in Lashio, where one caregiver is taking care of 32 children. The average age of the nine caregivers interviewed (all female) is 31 years. Six of them passed Grade 10 and two have University Degrees but two have not completed high school. The average years of teaching experience for these nine caregivers is 5.2 years.

The majority of caregivers have received ECCD training and seven caregivers indicated they received one month ECCD training. Among them, only two from school-based pre-schools have received training to work with children with disabilities. Six have attended refresher training. The training covered a wide range of topics such as child development and how to take care of children, curriculum planning and preparation, ECCD teaching methodologies such as storytelling, games,

poems and songs, developing play and learning materials, getting feedback and parenting education. The training topics were similar for school-based and community-based pre-schools.

There is a significant difference in relation to how the pre-school is organized between those who have received ECCD training and those who have not. Two caregivers who have never been trained on ECCD were not able to describe how ECCD activities could be properly organized and conducted.

There seems to be a lack of support for teachers to ensure that they work in accordance with the ECCD minimum standards in Myanmar. Daily observation, monitoring and providing feedback and guidance to the caregivers appears to be weak in all schools. The nine caregivers interviewed indicated that eight of the pre-schools have a management committee that oversees the management of the school. However, only five of them mentioned that the committees organize meetings with the caregivers, but again this is not done regularly and frequently. The committees rarely visit the schools to observe teaching and give guidance to the caregivers. There is only one pre-school where the management committee visited the school, observed the teaching and gave the feedback and guidance to the caregiver more than ten times in 2013-14 school year. This is probably because these committees are not properly equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to assume such responsibilities.

In contrast, seven out of eight principals from the pre-schools surveyed mentioned that there are regular caregivers' planning meetings, varying from once a week to half yearly. All caregivers also indicated that there is regular observation of the classroom teaching though the frequency of observation varies from one school to another, ranging from daily to quarterly in a year. This is likely by the school principal, not by the management committee.

Community involvement

The involvement of parents and families is crucial for all round development of children in the communities, and there is a positive step towards this initiated by the pre-schools surveyed for this study. Out of eight pre-schools, seven indicated that the management committees and the principals have arranged to meet parents of the children, and all teachers were likely to have met parents in the last school year (2013-14). However, only limited effort has been made to mobilize parents for greater involvement in the school activities. The school management, mainly the principal, makes occasional talks to the parents in the annual meetings and ceremonies either in the school or at the church to encourage them to send their children to school. Apart from this, there does not seem to be any other notable efforts to encourage parents to be involved in the school activities. This is confirmed in focus group discussions.

Notwithstanding the limited parental involvement in the children's learning, many of the pre-schools are supported through community contributions and parents often contribute their time and effort for construction (e.g. for fences, walkways etc.). Due to limited government support, most of the pre-schools have many needs – some lack their own buildings, some lack toilets or a good water supply, most lack adequate play and teaching materials, bedding, tables and chairs. Most community pre-schools thus try to raise funds or obtain donations from private companies, NGOs or religious organisations.

Management

As half of the pre-schools are school-based pre-schools, the management of these pre-schools is part of the school management by the principals. For some school-based pre-schools, the caregivers appear to be government teachers but for others, the recruitment is done in consultation with PTAs and School Management Committees. For some community pre-schools, the local church is also involved in the recruitment process as the school is run under the auspices of the church. Assignment of teachers for the pre-school is mostly done by the principal, and on some occasions in consultation with the teachers. The PTAs and Management Committees are not involved in the teacher assignment process. For caregivers who are not government teachers, their entitlements are usually decided by the PTA or the School Management Committee.

Most of the schools have a PTA and School Management Committee. The selection of the members varies with some selected by the village administrator and others selected by the community. Irrespective of how they were selected, the members usually include the village administrator, 10 Household leaders, church leaders, teachers and parents. The number of members varies widely from about 15 to more than 30 members. Most committees consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, cashier/accountant and general members. They organize regular meetings mainly facilitated by the Chairperson of the PTA or the School Management Committee, who usually is the principal of the school. In the 2013-14 school year, the committees met approximately 4 times, and the main topics discussed include collection of fees and contributions, infrastructure improvement, developing toys and learning materials and preparation for various ceremonies such as PTA annual meetings, annual school sports and religious occasions. There is only one pre-school which has discussed the development and implementation of the annual school plan and establishment of a fund for development of education in the school with the communities. In most schools, meeting records are kept although some committees indicated they do not yet do so as they are new. Decisions are usually informed to the community by word of mouth, during church service or through the village authorities.

Although all pre-schools collect fees, only five schools mention that they raise extra funds. There is a wide gap in the amount each school raised in a school year. A couple of pre-schools based in government high schools in the urban areas raised between 1,000,000 kyats to 5,000,000 kyats while most pre-schools raised only 100,000 to 200,000 kyats. For the high schools, this fund is for the entire school and was for specific projects (e.g. one school was fundraising for a staff house for teachers). These funds are usually used for infrastructure maintenance, furniture and giving prizes for outstanding students. One school uses all the funds for the caregivers' salary. Usually the committee oversees the management of the funds through the treasurer of the committee and the audit team of the organization.

Three pre-schools indicate that they have received training on school management, provided by the government and NGOs. The topics covered in the training include children's rights, protection for children, children with disabilities, gender equality and school administration. However, none of the School Management Committee members have received any training. There are a total of 5 caregivers who have been trained as ECCD trainers.

iii. Household and community factors affecting early childhood development

It is recognized that the first three to four years of life are critical in the development of a child, and that the support and the quality of care that a child receives during this time is a major determinant in their well-being. In this context, the activities that parents or adults engage in with their children serve as an important indicator of the quality of home care. Furthermore, the amount of time spent by adults on activities that support children can be important for a young child's mental development

The household survey showed that about 28% of children under-five in the survey get inadequate care, defined here as the percentage of children who were left alone or in the care of another child under-10 years of age for more than one hour at least once in the past week.

There have been few interventions to provide parenting education with only 9% of households having a member who has attended parenting education training. This was confirmed in focus group discussions where respondents noted that most of them had never received any parenting education but would be interested to do so. Only 11% of children under-five have access to children's books within their home. Nevertheless, many children under-five do have access to learning materials or "play things" such as toys -- 74% have toys made from objects around or in the household while a lesser number have access to play things bought in shops (66%) or which are homemade (43%).

Table 6: Children Under-five who have Access to Toys

Type of Toys	Percent of children
Homemade toys	43.0%
Toys bought from shops	66.0%
Household objects	73.9%

While most communities indicated an interest in supporting education for their children and are willing to attend any training provided, they are often at a loss about what to do: *"we need someone to lead or show us the way how to improve our effort to upgrade children's education."*

V. Children with Disabilities

Although information on children with disabilities is included in the relevant sections above, this section presents specific findings on education services for children with disabilities. The study sought to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in the household survey which covered all MEC partners. Consequently, the household sample was boosted to ensure that an adequate number of households with children with disabilities were interviewed. A specific component on disabilities was included in the household questionnaire but it is recognized that there were many limitations in the study in this area as there was limited expertise to adequately identify and assess these children, in particular children with learning disabilities.

The Comprehensive Education Sector Review of 2013⁸ indicates that there are currently no clear criteria for judging children with disabilities, including the degree of disability and there is a need to

⁸ (Ministry of Education, Government of Myanmar, 2013)

establish individual learning achievement/targets according to an individual's degree of disability. Currently, children with disabilities tend to attend public schools.

Among the children with disabilities surveyed, 16.2% had a hearing disability, 8.5% a seeing disability, 30.0% a physical disability and 23.8% a learning disability. The higher number of children with a physical disability may be because the survey sites included many remote and fragile environments exposed to past conflict and instability.

i. Educational attainment for children with disabilities

The Net Primary Enrolment Rate for children with disabilities, 81.9%, is comparable with that for other children. Apart from this indicator, it is difficult to assess educational attainment for children with disabilities due to the lower level of reliability of the data resulting from the smaller sample size. In general, however, the indicators for children with disabilities tend to be lower than the overall figures for all children combined.

While the Net Primary Enrolment Rate for children with disabilities is comparable with that for all children, the data indicates that a large percentage of these children do not attend school regularly. The household survey showed that only 22% of children with disabilities attended school for at least 80% of the time in the previous month.

ii. Education services for children with disabilities

The household survey found that only about 18% of children with disabilities get extra help within schools regardless of the kind of school. Most children with disabilities take the same examinations as other students under the same conditions. As a result children with disabilities tend to do less well when compared with regular children in school. There is lack of consideration for each disabled student to study according to his/her degree of disability including an appropriate support system and evaluation for these individuals.

In general, interviews in schools showed that most schools do not provide access for children with disabilities and most teachers have not been trained to work with such children. In some areas, some teachers noted that this is because they do not have children with disabilities in their schools but this begs the question of why these children are not in those schools.

iii. Household and community factors affecting education for children with disabilities

Despite the barriers noted, the study showed that a majority of people surveyed have positive attitudes towards schooling for children with disabilities. Seventy eight percent of total households interviewed responded positively to 2 of the 3 questions: whether children with disabilities should go to school; whether they should be integrated in regular schools; and whether they should get special help in regular schools. The positive attitudes were also reflected in focus group discussions where respondents noted that there is no discrimination against children with disabilities.

VI. Conclusions

The following are some of the key implications of the findings of the overall survey for consideration by MEC for further study and in the development of its programme with its partners.

1. The study shows that there are positive attitudes towards schooling for children with disabilities in the community and primary enrolment for children with disabilities is comparable with that of other children. However, it appears that children with disabilities are not attending school regularly and education attainment is somewhat lower than other children. This is likely because although children with disabilities are being accepted into regular schools, most teachers have not been trained to work with these children. Most teachers do not adapt materials for children with disabilities and no additional assistance is provided in the classroom. Furthermore, there are no accepted tools for assessing and thus identifying children with disabilities, in particular those with learning disabilities. MEC should support its partners to pilot models for inclusive education which can be promoted for wider acceptance in the government education system.
2. The study shows that children who speak the same language as that used in school have better comprehension rates highlighting the importance of mother tongue instruction in schools. The majority of the households interviewed consider it important to learn mother tongue, as well as Myanmar and English in the ethnic areas. Many of the schools supported by the MEC in the ethnic areas are government schools with Myanmar as the medium of instruction. The MEC should consider supporting partners to:
 - a. Develop methods and materials for teaching Myanmar as a second language to students in ethnic areas. Currently, the same teaching methods and materials used for teaching Myanmar to Myanmar students are used with ethnic children. As a result, ethnic children may learn to read and write Myanmar but do not necessarily understand the language.
 - b. Support schools to introduce and strengthen methods for teaching of ethnic languages in schools where Myanmar is the medium of instruction.
 - c. Provide support for use of mother tongue in the classroom for explaining concepts and instructions where Myanmar is the medium of instruction. This may include supporting teacher assistants and adapting teacher recruitment policies to ensure that there is a teacher who can speak the language of the children in each classroom.
3. Many of the children in school are overage indicating late entry into school and high repetition rates. In addition to tracking net enrolment rates, MEC should assess the gross enrolment rates to better understand enrolment levels in schools. Furthermore, MEC should support partners to better understand why children are starting school late in order to be able to better address this issue.
4. A number of indicators from the study are not consistent with the findings from other studies, in particular the lower reading ability of students who have attended a pre-school in comparison with those who have not, as well as the high percentage of children in first grade who have attended a pre-school. MEC should carry out additional studies to better understand the reasons for the differences.
5. Most of the schools have inadequate facilities. In particular, there is a need to improve water and sanitation facilities, particularly in non-government schools. MEC should consider providing support for these areas to its partners.
6. Although there appears to be significant community involvement in school management bodies and Parent Teacher Associations, these bodies have a minimal role and most of school

management is led by the school principal. MEC should support partners to find ways to better promote community involvement, for example in extra-curricular activities.

7. The survey found that most schools have inadequate funds and fees are currently being collected in pre-schools limiting accessibility by some children. In order to better understand financial management and financing needs in non-government schools, including in community and Ethnic Education Department schools and non-formal education centers, MEC should support a cost and financing study in collaboration with its partners.

VII. Bibliography

eddata II, USAID. (2014). Early Grade Reading Assessment. Retrieved August 2014, from www.eddataglobal.org.

Ministry of Education, Government of Myanmar. (2013). *Comprehensive Education Sector Review, Phase I Rapid Assessment Report*.

Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Health, UNICEF. (2011). *Myanmar Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009-2010*. Yangon.

RTI International. (2014). *Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) Toolkit*.

Annexes

Annex A: Baseline values of MEC indicators⁹

Baseline indicator	Boys	Girls	Children with Disabilities	Total	Indicator definition
Impact Indicators					
Net primary enrolment rate	83.6%	86.2%	81.9%	84.9%	Percent of children 5-9 years who are enrolled in primary school
Gross primary enrolment rate	108.9%	106.8%	105.7%	107.8%	Percent of children of any age enrolled in primary school over the children 5-9 years
Grade 3 promotion rate	76.9%	74.6%	66.7%	75.7%	Proportion of children who are in Grade 3 this year and were in Grade 2 last year
Grade 5 promotion rate	72.2%	72.0%	54.5%	72.2%	Proportion of children who are in Grade 5 this year and were in Grade 4 last year
Outcome Indicators					
Net primary school completion rate	12.1%	16.5%	6.7%	14.1%	Proportion among children nine years old who are in the last grade of primary school
Gross primary school completion rate	63.0%	82.7%	53.3%	72.3%	Proportion of children of any age who are in the last grade of primary school over children of age nine years
Transition rate to secondary school	89.8%	83.3%	90.9%	86.4%	Percentage of children in the first year of secondary school (Grade 6) this year who were in the last year of primary school the year before (Grade 5)
Net secondary enrolment rate	37.2%	43.1%	27.5%	40.2%	Percent of children 10-15 years who are enrolled in secondary school
Gross secondary enrolment rate	42.9%	51.2%	30.4%	47.1%	Percent of children of any age enrolled in secondary school over the children 10-15 years
Early Childhood Development					
Net intake rate in primary education	48.7%	45.7%	63.1%	47.2%	Percent of children in the first grade of primary school (Kindergarten in Myanmar) who are of the official primary school-entrance age (5 years)
Gross intake rate in primary education	158.5%	152.0%	200.0%	155.2%	Percent of children in the first grade of primary school (Kindergarten in Myanmar) of any age over the children of 5 years
Early Child Development Index ¹⁰	70.6%	77.4%	86.7%	73.6%	Percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains -- literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning domains

⁹ The figures in red have a higher standard error due to the smaller sample size for the calculation of the indicator. This means that the estimate has a lower level of reliability.

¹⁰ See Annex B for a full explanation of Early Child Development Index.

Baseline indicator	Boys	Girls	Children with Disabilities	Total	Indicator definition
Children with Special Needs					
Percentage of children with disabilities who attend primary school with at least 80% attendance	16.7%	35.7%	NA	22.0%	Percent of children with disabilities with at least 80% attendance at primary school in the previous month
Results Indicators					
Early Childhood Development					
Percentage of children currently in the first grade of primary school who have benefitted from an ECCD intervention	58.5%	62.2%	76.3%	60.3%	Percent of children in first grade (KG) who attended pre-school during the previous school year
Net ECCD enrolment ratio	22.3%	23.3%	21.4%	22.7%	Percent of children 3-4 years who are enrolled in a pre-school
Gross ECCD enrolment ratio	34.8%	37.0%	28.6%	35.8%	Percent of children any age enrolled in a pre-school
Percentage of households with school-going children where one member has attended parenting education training				8.6%	Percent of households with pre-school aged children where one member has attended parenting education training
Percentage of respondents who have positive attitudes towards parenting practices				89.3%	Percent of respondents who have 2 of 3 positive attitudes towards parenting practices (physical punishment, time for play, equal opportunities for girls for schooling)
Complementary Education					
Grade 3 promotion rate in complementary education system schools	68.6%	67.4%	66.7%	68.0%	Percent of children in Grade 3 in 2013-2014 school year and were in Grade 2 in 2012-2013 school year in complementary education project townships
Percentage of households where an adult has had contact with the school				12.1%	Percent of households where an adult has had contact with the school
Children with Special Needs					
Percentage of respondents with positive attitudes towards inclusive schooling for children with disabilities				77.7%	Percent of respondents with at least 2 of 3 positive attitudes towards children with disabilities (ability to attend school, integration into regular schools, special help in regular schools)
Out-of-School Children					
Percentage of respondents with positive attitudes towards education for out of school children				93.2%	Percent of respondents with 1 of 2 positive attitudes towards education for out of school children (ability to receive non-formal education, knowledge of non-formal education facilities)

Annex B: Early Childhood Development Index

'Early child development' is defined as an orderly, predictable process along a continuous path, in which a child learns to handle more complicated levels of moving, thinking, speaking, feeling and relating to others. Physical growth, literacy and numeracy skills, socio-emotional development and readiness to learn are vital domains of a child's overall development, which is a basis for overall human development.

A 10-item module is used to calculate the Early Child Development Index (ECDI). The ECDI is based on benchmarks that children are expected to reach if they are progressing in their development as the majority of children in their age group develop.

Each of the 10 items is used in one of four domains to determine whether children are developmentally on track in that domain. The domains in question are:

- Literacy-numeracy: Children are identified as being developmentally on track according to whether they can identify/name at least 10 letters of the alphabet, whether they can read at least four simple, popular words, and whether they know the names and recognize the symbols of all numbers from 1 to 10. If at least two of these capabilities are found, the child is considered developmentally on track
- Physical: If the child can pick up a small object such as a stick or a rock from the ground with two fingers, and/or the mother or caretaker does not indicate that the child is sometimes too sick to play, then the child is regarded as being developmentally on track in the physical domain
- Social-emotional: Children are considered to be developmentally on track if two of the following are true: the child gets along well with other children; the child does not kick, bite or hit other children; and the child does not get distracted easily
- Learning: If the child follows simple directions on how to do something correctly and/or when given something to do, is able to do it independently, then the child is considered to be developmentally on track in this domain

ECDI is calculated as the percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains.

Sources: *Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) 2011-2012 (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey/Demographic and Health Survey)*. December 2012. Lao PDR.