

Myanmar Education
Consortium
Program Document
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1. Acronyms

CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCA	Child-centred Approach
CESR	Comprehensive Education Sector Review
CRSA	Child Rights Situational Analysis
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEPT	Department of Education Planning and Training
DP	Development Partner in Education
DPRE	Disaster Preparedness for Response in Education
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ETWG	Education Thematic Working Group
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
HH	Household
INEE	Inter Agency Network on Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
JESWG	Joint Education Sector Working Group
KED	Karen Education Department
MDEF	Multi-donor Education Fund
MEC	Myanmar Education Consortium
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOE	Ministry of Education
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSA	Non-state Actor
QBEP	Quality Basic Education Program
TC	Transitions Curriculum
TEO	Township Education Officer
ToT	Training-of-trainers

2. Summary

2.1. The Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC)

The Myanmar Education Consortium is a program designed to increase the quality of and access to early childhood, primary and non-formal education programs being implemented by non-state actors in Myanmar. In particular MEC will support 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. Recognising that there are already a rich and diverse number of organisations involved in the non-government education sector the MEC will seek to develop consensus around minimum standards in early childhood, primary and non-formal education and support the development of advocacy strategies that have a direct impact on national education policy and practice. The program will link with the work of other major education focussed agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO to ensure collaboration and sharing of lessons learned.

The MEC will be initially led by three international NGOs, Burnet Institute, Save the Children and World Vision¹. In 2013 MEC will identify new Myanmar and international partners to support and establish a trust fund mechanism that will fund NGOs, CSO, and CBOs², in education activities that complement the government systems and to inform policy and strategic debate. Further, the MEC will engage proactively with the Government of Myanmar to support education sector reform to enable sustainable improvements in education for poor and disadvantaged children, particularly those in hard to reach areas.

2.2. The Myanmar Education Sector

Since the 2010 elections and the subsequent coming to power of a new parliamentary government, officials have made strong public overtures and taken positive action towards

¹In the wake of Cyclone Nargis, these agencies engaged in a working collaboration on a range of education programs through funding from AusAID. This initial collaboration proved to have impacts beyond those originally envisaged with the different approaches and ideas being well coordinated, complementarities being identified and better overall program cohesion. A 2010 study of Most Significant Change identified positive changes in communities where a series of educational services in a single village were implemented, bringing many types of learners into programming. This partnership generated the possibility of a greater civil society led engagement in the basic education sector which has now become the MEC.

²Civil Society: The wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations. Ref - <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>. Accessed on 25th June 2013

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs): Professional, intermediary, and non-profit organisations that provide or advocate the provision of services relating to economic and social development, human rights, public welfare, or emergency relief. Ref - Asian Development Bank CSO sourcebook: A staff guide to cooperation with civil society organisations. Mandaluyong City, Phil.: Asian Development Bank, 2008.

Community-Based Organisations (CBOs): CBOs are generally organised to directly address the immediate concerns of their members. A key characteristic of CBOs is that they can mobilize communities by expressing demands, organising and implementing participatory processes, accessing external development services, and sharing benefits among members. They have a wide range of functions that encompass activities relating to economic, social, religious, and even recreational issues. Examples of CBOs include neighbourhood associations, tenant associations, community development organisations, water-user groups, and credit associations. Ref - Asian Development Bank CSO sourcebook: a staff guide to cooperation with civil society organisations. Mandaluyong City, Phil.: Asian Development Bank, 2008.

laying out an aid effectiveness and reform agenda, including in the education sector. President Thein Sein, in the first regular session of Parliament, encouraged lawmakers to improve the national education system. In February 2012, the government held a conference on “Development Policy Options with Special Reference to Education and Health.” Following this, on March 6, 2012, members of Lower Parliament discussed, on record, the proposal to “review and reform the education system,” which had been submitted and approved in January

Education providers in Myanmar consist of: the State, the Monastic School System, Ethnic Education Departments and civil society/ non state organisations. The **State education system** currently provides for 11 years of free schooling: 5 years primary, 4 years of middle school and 2 years of high school, although this is planned to move to a 6 – 3 – 3 structure under current review and reform proposals. There is no formal system of preschool learning or non-formal education. Transition from year to year is dependent on passing a state sponsored examination. Government statistics give a primary Net Enrolment Rate of 84.1%; household survey data suggest a Net Intake Ratio of 74.4% and a primary completion rate of 54.2%³. The Department of Education Planning and Training claims that 90% of primary teachers have a one year Certificate level training. Pupil teacher ratios vary widely between States from 20:1 in East Shan to 97:1 in Chin with many schools providing multigrade teaching. While the official language of instruction in state schools is Myanmar, the government itself has been printing text books in 5 ethnic languages and has publicly said that ethnic languages are important. This new attitude presents an opportunity for integrating other languages into the classroom.

Available data suggest an erratic funding pattern to education over the past 10 years from as low as 0.1% of GDP in 2007/8 up to 7% in 2011/12. A breakdown of the 2010/11 budget suggests a per pupil cost of \$30 dollars (based on a figure of 8 million students) of which 80% is salary, 5% capital expenditure and 15% goods and services.

There are approximately 1,500 registered **Monastic schools**, financed through a variety of contributions that come under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The number of schools has remained more or less the same but the number of students registered has increased from 93,000 in 1997 to 190,000 in 2008/9. Monastic schools do not have to be registered and so the numbers are likely to be much higher. All levels are taught but there is a concentration on basic education, teachers do not have to be registered as qualified.

The **Ethnic Education Departments provide** education outside the government system mostly in ceasefire areas, refugee camps and internally displaced people’s communities, however in some cases where government education services are also available. **Civil society education actors** are engaged in a wide range of education activity funded by bilateral donors, the private sector, NGOs and communities. The activity is fragmented and not efficiently coordinated.

2.3. Education Challenges

It is generally recognised that the formal education system requires extensive modernization with work in curriculum, teacher training, materials development, information systems, assessment and management and administration needed. There have

³ Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2009-2012*, October 2011

been a number of long-term national plans for the education sector, including the 30 year long-term education development plan 2001 – 2031 and a number of five year education plans as well as the EFA plan of 2003 – 2015. Although EFA national action plan maps out main areas for improvement, to date, it lacks a comprehensive work plan and dedicated budget.

While solid data are still difficult to access, a picture is emerging of several barriers to education:

- Poverty and discrimination; while education is intended to be free there are both direct and indirect costs;
- Language: around 30% of children do not have Myanmar as their mother tongue⁴;
- Gender: data suggest an overall parity but girls are the first to be removed from school for financial or other reasons;
- Disability: only 708 children have access to special schools;
- Conflict and natural disasters have a significant impact on children's ability to attend school;
- No formal mechanisms to reach out to school children who do not attend school due to age or other reasons.

2.4. Current Response

Since the 2010 elections and the subsequent coming to power of a new parliamentary government, officials have made strong public overtures and taken positive action towards laying out a reform agenda for the education sector. President Thein Sein, in the first regular session of Parliament, encouraged lawmakers to improve the national education system. In February 2012, the government held a conference on “Development Policy Options with Special Reference to Education and Health.” Following this, on March 6, 2012, members of Lower Parliament discussed, on record, the proposal to “review and reform the education system,” which had been submitted and approved in January. Since then, the Ministry of Education (MOE), with support from a range of stakeholders and Development Partners including donors, NGOs, and UNICEF, has initiated a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). This CESR is planned as a two year process which takes place over three phases – a Rapid Assessment, in-depth analysis and the development of a Costed Education Sector Plan. This changing context is providing significant openings and opportunities but makes for a complex planning environment.

UNICEF has been the foremost agency supporting the Myanmar Government in the education sector through the Quality Basic Education Program (2012 – 2015) and a predecessor program from 2007 - 2011. The UNICEF program primarily supports the formal sector and ultimately aims to influence policy and strategic planning.

Programs managed by International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) have focussed on early childhood education, out of school youth, hard to reach children and strengthening complementary education systems and education provision in emergency response. Local NGOs and other civil society organisations are becoming increasingly active in the education sector. This includes organisations working on teacher training, stipends for children and infrastructure support. There are numerous other education activities but they generally

⁴Immigration and Population Department, Ministry of Immigration and Population, *Myanmar Population Changes and Fertility Survey*, 1995.

lack coordination. Overall, the potential impact on policy, strategy and greater access and quality are not fully realised as a result of fragmentation.

2.5. The MEC Program

Given the current challenges and potential for increasing support to the education sector, the MEC builds on a theory of change that will provide evidence-based voice to children, communities, parents and educators to demand change, seek innovative solutions to respond to the demand side, and look to implement at scale all through strong partnerships. The **goal/impact** of the program is: increased number and proportion of children in Myanmar accessing and completing quality basic education.

The **outcome** will be: Innovative, coordinated and quality driven community and complementary education services that ensure more children and particularly the hardest to reach are ready to enter primary education and greater opportunity exists for children to gain quality learning in complementary education systems

There are five components to the MEC:

Component 1: All children are ready to be successful in school through quality ECCD learning experiences

Output 1.1: Access to community-managed ECCD services meeting minimum standards

Output 1.2: Access to school-based ECCD services meeting minimum standards⁵ in complementary education systems

Output 1.3: Increased awareness of parents and extended families on ECCD

Output 1.4: Increased access to capacity building and systematic professional development for ECCD caregivers

Output 1.5: All children experience a 'smooth transition' to primary school education

Output 1.6: Systems of quality control strengthened among ECCD providers

Component 2: Access to quality complementary basic education systems significantly improved.

To ensure children attend and complete primary education Component 2 will build capacity in 'complementary' education systems such as the monastic school system and the ethnic education systems. This will happen through building capacity in school leadership and management, improving quality of teaching and learning and encouraging the greater involvement of parents and community.

Output 2.1: Management and leadership capacity of complementary school systems strengthened

Output 2.2: Teachers and schools deliver effective child-centred education meeting minimum standards

Output 2.3: Schools are safe and child-friendly environments conducive to learning.

Output 2.4: Parents and communities actively engaged in education

Component 3: Civil society engages in education sector policy debate.

As a part of a sector-wide approach, MEC will complement the QBEP Output 3, "Enhanced planning, management, monitoring & evaluation and mentoring capacity of key education

⁵ In 2006, ECCD stakeholders in Myanmar, including: the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, ILNGOs, LNGOs and UNICEF/UN agencies developed "Core Indicators Minimum Quality Standards for ECD"

actors at all levels, “ by fostering the development of a broad-based coalition of non-state education actors.

Output 3.1: Enhanced cooperation of non-state actors in education

Output 3.2: Innovative and scalable education programs implemented by civil society organisations (e.g. local NGOs, CBOs, FBOs)

Component 4: Out-of-school children access quality alternative education programs.

Despite an increase in the quality and geographic coverage of education services through MEC and QBEP, the reality for a significant number of children and families is that they will not be able to afford a complete primary school. MEC with its civil society partnerships will target out of school children with a variety of innovative, community-based programs aimed at increasing literacy and numeracy as well as developing children and young people’s life skills and work opportunities

Output 4.1: Analysis of reasons for children being out of school

Output 4.2: Appropriate interventions researched and developed

Output 4.3: Out-of-school children have opportunities to access literacy and numeracy training, life-skills development, and reengage with school-based learning

Component 5: Access to education in emergencies.

A child who has had an education disrupted whether by illness, emergency or other reasons, will always have difficulty catching up, and in many cases may never fully do so. The longer the disruption to a child’s education, the greater he or she will be at a disadvantage. Myanmar is vulnerable to a number of natural disasters including flood, cyclone, drought, storm, landslide and earthquake, tsunami, forest fires and urban fires, as well as ethnic and inter-communal violence.

Output 5.1: Emergency education fund mechanism established for immediate education needs in emergencies

Output 5.2: Local partners and communities have received basic training on education in emergencies

Output 5.3: Education equipment repositories set up

2.6. Budget

The indicative budget for the MEC is **41,940,535 USD**.

Category/Year	1	2	3	4	Total
Component 1 - ECD	3,919,534	3,146,515	1,905,942	3,629,465	12,601,458
Component 2 – Access to quality basic education	1,216,180	2,782,213	2,598,823	4,839,287	11,436,503
Component 3 – Policy Dialogue and Capacity Building	47,105	976,090	162,896	170,040	1,356,131
Component 4 – NFE / alternatives for out-of-school children	273,050	687,666	1,608,597	3,629,465	6,198,778
Component 5 – Emergencies	50,000	300,000	0	0	350,000
Capacity Building Costs	133,017	369,661	388,146	407,554	1,298,378
M&E Costs	141,060	358,179	303,014	211,999	1,014,252
PMU Management & Administration	695,343	1,037,305	893,851	902,266	3,528,765
ICR	712,282	1,062,339	864,740	1,516,908	4,156,269
TOTAL	7,187,571	10,719,969	8,726,010	15,306,986	41,940,535

Component 1 represents the implementation costs which contribute to quality ECCD programming, enabling the most marginalised children to have the best preparation for entry to primary school. In years 1 and 2 these activities will be implemented directly by Save the Children and World Vision. In year 2, 3 and 4, these activities will be implemented by a variety of partners through the MEC grant mechanism.

Component 2 represents the implementation costs which contribute to supporting improvements in complementary basic education systems, particularly the monastic school system and the ethnic education systems. In years 1 and 2 these activities will be implemented directly by Burnet Institute. In year 2, 3 and 4, these activities will also be implemented by a variety of partners through the MEC grant mechanism.

Component 3 represents the costs of 1) enabling local partners to implement innovative education initiatives, 2) civil society coordination and advocacy and 3) capacity development. In years 2 to 4 these activities will be implemented by a variety of partners through the MEC grant mechanism.

Component 4 represents the implementation costs which contribute to developing quality alternative education programs, particularly for out of school children. In years 1 and 2 these activities will be implemented directly by World Vision. In years 2, 3 and 4 these

activities will be implemented by a variety of partners through the MEC grant mechanism.

Component 5 represents the costs of ensuring that an education response can be activated in the event of natural disasters or other emergency situations. In years 1 to 4 this component will incorporate activities to strengthen resilience at community level and provide small grants to enable immediate action in the event of an emergency.

Capacity Building costs are attributable primarily to the MEC capacity building team who will identify and work with partners to build the capacity of local partners in education programming and to strengthen organisational capacity.

Monitoring and Evaluation costs represent the costs of measuring progress and capturing programmatic learning across the whole MEC. It is estimated that 10% of Component Costs will be attributed to M&E. M&E also includes the MEC M&E Team and a proportional amount of the MEC staff that will contribute to program monitoring and evaluation.

Admin / Management Costs includes costs for the establishment and running costs of the MEC TEAM minus a proportional amount that will contribute to program monitoring and evaluation and capacity building.

2.7. Management and Financing Modality

From March 2013 to February 2017, the program will move from grant funding for the MEC 3 founding partners to a Trust Fund management system with a Board of Trustees awarding and monitoring the allocation of grants to a range of CSO, CBO, and NGOs partners.

In Year 1 and 2, the founding partners continue and conclude their engagement in the programs that they are running. In Year 1, simultaneously, the MEC Team will organise the establishment of funding mechanisms and support the Trustees in managing and expanding the grants program. In 2013, an organisational mapping exercise will be completed to identify and map potential partners, their capacity needs and identify potential innovations. Starting in 2014, the trustees will provide grants to a range of partners, monitoring progress and providing evidence based policy and strategic advice to implementing partners, donors and other stakeholders. Presently, four grant funding mechanisms are under consideration:

1. Development fund: for larger and longer term programs.
2. Innovation/Capacity Development fund: for smaller and short term innovations with possibilities for scale up, and Capacity Development.
3. Education Emergency Fund: for immediate education emergency response.
4. Strategic Facilitation Fund: for small investments in actions that unlock critical education sector reform processes.

In 2013, the program will be managed by a Program Steering Committee who will meet monthly and a MEC Management Team who will manage the day to day program management. Transfer of management responsibility to the Board of Trustees, supported by the MEC Management Team, will take place by April 2014.

During the first two years, Save the Children, as the prime recipient of donor funds, will hold contracts and sub-grant agreements with World Vision and Burnett Institute. These will include a description of activities and deliverables, total budget and management and

reporting requirements. Under the agreements, World Vision and Burnett Institute will provide sub-grants to their partners as required (using their own sub grant management systems) and ensure that partners meet the compliance and regulations included in their respective agreements with Save the Children. The reporting deadlines included in Year 1 and 2 sub-grants to World Vision and Burnett Institute will be in line with Save the Children's overall project reporting commitments (quarterly financial reports and semester narrative reports.) During 2013 and 2014, the sub-granting arrangements described, as well as Save the Children's project activities, will be covered by overall project grant agreements with AusAID.

In 2013, the MEC Team will work together with the donors and the Program Steering Committee to establish the grant funding mechanisms. Save the Children Myanmar will house the MEC Team. The MEC Team will be responsible for managing and overseeing the provision of sub-grants to all implementing partners (IPs) successfully applying to the fund. However, the MEC will not be a separate legal entity. Therefore, IP sub-grant agreements and contracts will be between Save the Children Myanmar and individual IPs. The contracts will be based on Save the Children's standard sub-granting procedures and on other donor funds in Myanmar, with contracts outlining activities and deliverables, total budget and management and reporting requirements. Reporting deadlines will vary for each IP contract, depending on project start dates and the type of grant awarded. However, IP reporting will, as far as possible, be in line with the overall project reporting commitments described above.

2.8. Partners and Reach

Partners who will work with the founding agencies in the ongoing activity have been identified and the geographical focus agreed. In 2014 and 2015, the Trustees may select specific themes and concentration of areas to ensure a measured and gradual expansion of granting activities. Principles for geographical targeting will include ensuring a balance across Bamar and ethno linguistic minority groups⁶, prevalence of poverty, community interest, demographic profile (percentage of children under 6), and access to basic services that compound impacts.

Opportunity will be provided to new partners to build their management, monitoring and reporting capacity.

2.7. Capacity Development and Collaboration

Members/Partners in the MEC will be able to take part in a comprehensive capacity development program, which will include an institutional capacity assessment, customised training and mentoring and evaluation. Areas for capacity development include education technical capacity, organisational development and advocacy. There will be an emphasis on coordination and active collaboration among MEC partners/members.

The MEC will support the development of existing collaboration mechanisms, such as the ETWG and its working groups, and the CESR. MEC will foster the involvement of civil society in these kinds of groups, preferring this to creating new ones. Where there is a need for

⁶ Whilst it may be assumed that the most vulnerable children are ethno linguistic minority children it should be acknowledged that many Myanmar speaking children are also marginalized and disadvantaged including children of mobile laborers and internal migrants, children in difficult circumstances such as homeless children and children living in urban slums, and children who have been displaced. The MEC will attempt to balance all these competing demands

other coalitions to form, they will be based as much as possible on locally expressed need rather than MEC setting the agenda.

The MEC will establish platforms to facilitate horizontal and vertical linkages that further coordinate civil society actors, systematically consulting with national, regional and international representatives of civil society. These consultations will lead to a broad communications plan. In this way, MEC will become a catalyst for communications, but not the exclusive convener. The MEC will foster the development of broad-based coalitions of non-state education actors. Joined up, skilled, informed and innovative, these coalitions will be positioned to engage in policy debate and reform ensuring a more representative diversity of contributions. For the MEC, strengthening of civil society is both a means to an end - high quality service delivery – and, an end in itself -- a responsible and representative voice on important education matters. Activities will be founded on evidence from a comprehensive organisational mapping of local civil society organisations across Myanmar that are involved in education activities. Initially, the MEC will not take the lead in representing civil society but will support the growth of coalitions both for advocacy leading to policy change as well as technical discussion and exchange. These collaboration and advocacy strategies will be further developed when the governance structure and the ownership of MEC are clarified.

2.8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E system for MEC will be an integrated system of reflection and communication supporting project implementation. The M&E System put in place for MEC will ensure that the system helps primary stakeholders, implementing partners and project staff learn together in order to improve the MEC interventions on a continual basis.

MEC's Theory of Change links at the impact level with the UNICEF managed QBEP and will form the basis for MEC's M&E framework. This linkage of MEC to Myanmar's QBEP makes it crucial for the MEC to be "Managing for Impact" meaning that MEC needs to respond to changing circumstances and increased understanding by adapting the project so that it will more likely to achieve its intended impacts. Managing for impact is only possible if MEC has reliable information about the progress of activities and their outcomes, the reasons for success and failure, and the context in which activities are taking place. This information is the output of MEC's M&E procedures.

Policy dialogue in the education sector will be informed by the body of evidence generated from the M&E system of MEC. Knowledge management component of the MEC's M&E system will help MEC and its partners to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. The evidence gathered through monitoring and research will enable MEC to be more effective in representing the voice at global, regional, sub-regional and national partnerships, networks and alliances. Capacity building activities with local implementing partners will include the development of research capacity so that organisations can underpin their interventions with robust operational research. In turn, this will assist in the development of a more complete set of data that can inform education reform in both practice and policy.

2.9. Advocacy

Advocacy efforts will support a wider debate and dialogue on alternative and complementary education solutions for difficult-to-reach populations and settings to gain high level political commitment to the importance of promoting access to quality education

for the most disadvantaged in country through: research and building the evidence base, information sharing and knowledge management, joint public awareness raising campaigns, policy dialogue and capacity building for people-centred advocacy⁷. The advocacy strategy needs to be highly adaptive and flexible, to increase its effectiveness in the quickly changing institutional panorama and the political arena that Myanmar will display in the immediate and midterm future. MEC is already discussing with the MoE task Manager of the Comprehensive Education Sector Review, a possible MEC role in the development of the Phase II Non Formal Education component.

In addition, due to the fragmented nature of civil society at present, advocacy efforts from the MEC will also be directed at encouraging civil society groups to collaborate more effectively both on policy and technical interventions. MEC's aims for civil society to be seen as a key contributor to policy reform as well as a leader and innovator in quality education initiatives.

⁷People-centred advocacy has been defined as "a set of organised actions aimed at influencing public policies, societal attitudes, and socio-political processes that enable and empower the marginalised to speak for themselves" (Samuel, 2002)

3. Justification

3.1. Country Context

The military dictatorships of the past four decades have, to a certain degree, used education as a tool to consolidate power. The closure of the country's institutions of higher education in the aftermath of 1988 student demonstrations showed the state's power to deny education opportunities to its citizens. Chronically underfunded and highly centralized, the state-sponsored system has deteriorated significantly since independence, particularly in rural and ethnic-minority dominated areas.

However, since the 2010 elections and the subsequent coming to power of a new parliamentary government, officials have made strong public overtures and taken positive action towards laying out a reform agenda for the education sector. President Thein Sein, in the first regular session of Parliament, encouraged lawmakers to improve the national education system. In February 2012, the government held a conference on "Development Policy Options with Special Reference to Education and Health." Following this, on March 6, 2012, members of Lower Parliament discussed, on record, the proposal to "review and reform the education system," which had been submitted and approved in January 2013. Since then, the Ministry of Education (MOE), with support from a range of stakeholders and Development Partners including bi-lateral, the UN, Financial Institutions and NGOs has initiated a process for a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). This is a 2 year process, which will be carried out in three phases (Rapid Assessment, In-depth Analysis and Costed Education Sector Plan). The CESR entered its second phase in June 2013.

The inauguration of the new government also meant that fourteen state and division level assemblies were formed. It is not yet clear what power these assemblies will have, though the assemblies could lead to decentralization of decision-making and increase the potential for civil society engagement with government at that level.

Since late 2011, preliminary ceasefires have been agreed with all non-State groups, but these have yet to be transitioned to longer term political settlements. In line with the decentralisation agenda outlined in recent Presidential speeches, the central government and non-State groups are discussing devolving some level of decision-making authority to the ethnic education departments as part of the negotiations. Ceasefire agreements may also include provisions for the use of mother-tongue languages in school and the creation of a curriculum more relevant to the lives of the children in their communities.

International investment in the country is likely to increase dramatically over the coming decade. Following by-elections held in April 2012, a number of countries including the EU, Australia and the US eased sanctions. This has influenced direct foreign investment, and opens the country to the international financial institutions (as evidenced by an announcement by the World Bank to open an office in June 2012), increasing aid levels for Myanmar which has been historically under-funded relative to its neighbours. Increased investment and aid will need a workforce with a higher level of skill than is currently available.

In addition to a broad expansion of operational space for civil society, these evolving conditions in the legal and regulatory context are promising with regards to the possibility of making real strides in the area of improving learning impacts for Myanmar's children. The decentralization of decision-making, through state and division level governments and

ceasefire zones, facilitates the development of an education system more responsive to the needs of local communities. Economic growth will ensure that the creation of human capital through improved education leads to better jobs and household incomes. As political and economic systems evolve, Myanmar's people will be motivated to stay in the country and contribute to an educated citizenry that will advance democratic and human rights-driven values.

3.2. Education Sector Analysis⁸

3.2.1. Sector Overview

Myanmar was ranked at the bottom segment, 149 out of 187, in the UNDP Human Development Index for 2012. GDP quickened to an estimated 6.3% in fiscal year 2012⁹ and fertility rates are stagnant. The population of about 55 to 60 million, approximately 38% of whom are under the age of 18, is largely rural with most families' livelihoods dependent on agricultural activities. Political tension, catastrophic economic policies and discrimination against ethnic minorities have contributed to complex, multi-faceted poverty. Low level government spending committed to health and education sector has further compounded a decline in socio-economic conditions.¹⁰

The 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, a household-based survey, puts net intake ratio (NIR) at 74.4% and Net Primary School Completion Rate at 54.2%. Official government statistics which put the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in the 2009/10 academic year stood at 89.9% and the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at 84.1% may not be reliable based on their use of projections of 1983 population census data. The last census was taken in 1983 and with increasingly inaccurate population predictions, newly generated population-wide data and starting points for costing have become increasingly unreliable. The government has agreed to complete a national census in 2014, in collaboration with UN agencies.

There have been a number of long-term national plans for the education sector, including the 30 year long-term education development plan 2001 – 2031 and a number of five year education plans as well as the EFA plan of 2003 – 2015. Although the EFA national action plan maps out main areas for improvement, to date, it lacked comprehensive work plans and dedicated budgets.

Statistics from the Annual Myanmar Laws, published by the Attorney General's Office record that public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP fell from 0.4% in 2002/3 to 0.1% in 2007/8 before again rising to 7%. The recommended benchmark figure is 6% of GDP in EFA/Education Sector Development Plans from the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Framework. These figures also show that the education share as a proportion of government expenditure had been low dropping from 4% in 2002/3 to just over 2% in 2006/7 before rising to over 5% in 2007/8. The 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report indicates a slight increase in the proportion of the GNP that goes to education (from 0.39% in 2003 to 0.7% in 2008); these figures are 5 times lower than the regional average of 3.6% from 2006.

⁸ The various statistics quoted in the proposal are the latest available at the time of writing the proposal. As more recent education sector statistics become available to MEC, they will be updated in the reports. Also, the baselines, monitoring and evaluation data, the surveys and the research that MEC plans to conduct will give us reliable and valid data of the education sector that are of interest to the MEC program.

⁹ ADB <http://www.adb.org/countries/myanmar/economy> June 10, 2013

¹⁰IMF Article IV Briefing, December 17, 2009

The Department of Educational Training and Planning reports a total expenditure, including capital costs, of approximately 231 million USD, for the 2010/11 academic year. Based on their figure of 8 million students enrolled this is roughly \$30 per student.¹¹ They report a significant increase in education expenditure since 2005. Although recurrent salary costs represent around 80% of the education recurrent budget (compared to a range of 70-90% in most developing countries¹²) and 5% for capital, this leaves little for supply and maintenance. In February 2012, the Minister of Finance reported that total expenditure on basic education for the 2012-2013 academic years will increase to approximately \$757 million, a 4.9% share of the total government budget.¹³ The augmentation of government expenditure in education signals increasing will on their part to address critical needs in the sector.

The scope of needed improvements in the sector is great. For example, there is no separate budget line for early childhood intervention or non-formal education activities. A first round of findings from the sector review process has identified the gaps and led to proposed policy changes in early childhood and non formal education sectors.” Additionally, the MOE, donors and UNICEF are managing a process to discuss the implementation of the EFA national plan and the CESR, which will eventually need to be presented to parliament in order to review education laws.

3.2.2. Education Providers

There are currently four main avenues for children to access basic education in Myanmar – state-sponsored schools, monastic education, ceasefire area systems and private schools. In addition to these avenues, international NGOs, and local faith-based and community-based organisations provide education services in various parts of the country. There are also an unknown number of community-led or self-help schools which are not recognized by the government. These are entirely community run and staffed with teachers hired by the community.

Table 1¹⁴ represents the current size of the student and teacher population in registered schools. This includes monastic, affiliated and private schools, which may not be financially supported by the government, though enrolment data are included in official statistics.

¹¹ Department of Education Planning and Training, “Brief Presentation on Basic Education,” Presented at Educational Thematic Working Group Meeting, January 24, 2011.

¹² King, E.M. (2009) The Global Economic Crisis, Education, and Development Partnerships. Keynote Presentation at the HDN-WBI Course on Innovations in Partnerships, September 21, 2009, Washington DC.<http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/252243/Keynote%20presentation%2C%20Elizabeth%20King.pdf>

¹³ “Myanmar to Raise Health, Education Budgets for 2012-2013,” Xinhua, 07/02/2012.

¹⁴ Monastery Schools: Ministry of Religious Affairs, Monastic Education Monitoring Group, “2008-2009 List of Monastic and Nunnery Schools.” Printed with the support of Taw Tike School. Government School: The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Education, “Access to and Quality of Basic Education for All in Myanmar,” February 2012.

Table1 School Statistics¹⁵

Year	2011/12	2008/9
	Govt	Monastic
Primary	35,729	1,322
Middle	3,163	119
High	2,395	2
Total Schools	41,287	1,443
Teachers		
Primary	184,170	
Middle	67,398	
High	26,612	
Total Teachers	276,180	
Students		
Primary	5,195,952	157,530
Middle	2,332,249	29,164
High	672,394	4,678
Total students	8,200,595	191,372

Government Schools

Clearly, the largest education provider in the country is the government. The government oversees education primarily through the MOE, but with involvement from the Department of Education Planning and Training, Ministry of Border Areas, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Ministry of Trade. MOE maintains a highly centralized approach. It officially consults with other bodies, including, AusAID, UNICEF, UNESCO and JICA. Active INGOs and other non-state actors engage with other state agencies including Department of Social Welfare and Department of Health, which has allowed them to provide critical education services outside of the government-sponsored school system.

The size of the state education system has grown considerably in the two decades. Improved coverage at the primary level has been achieved in part by the establishment of many small 'multi-grade' schools, which in border areas can

account for up to 70% of total provision.

Under the Ministry of Education, there is an education office in each of the country's seven states and seven divisions. The state/division level offices support the activities of the Township Education Officer (TEO) who is placed in each of the 325 townships. The TEO is responsible for in-service training of teachers, payment of teachers, supervision and support of teachers as well as reporting upwards on school statistics and maintenance of schools and classrooms. Additionally, interaction with any NGOs or external organisations must also be coordinated by the TEO. Given the level of human and financial resources available to the TEO, it is impossible for him or her to carry out all of these duties. In many rural townships, travel time between schools alone inhibits achievement.

At present, the Myanmar education system is still comprised of eleven years of schooling, five years of primary, four years of middle school and two years of high school. One of the options considered is planned to move to a 6 – 3 – 3 structure under current review and reform proposals. Advancing from one grade level to the next is contingent upon passing a government-sponsored examination at the end of each school year and students who pass

¹⁵ We acknowledge the importance of the Ethnic Education Service providers, and their programs. As we were unable to compile data for their schools, we will include their numbers in the Organisational Mapping exercise in 2013.

the matriculation examination at the end of high school are considered qualified to attend institutions of higher learning. Fewer than half of the enrolled students pass the Grade 11 final matriculation exam. The system is designed for students to enter Grade One at five years of age and graduate from high school at age sixteen or seventeen.

The school year, which officially runs over 180 days (in five day weeks) from June to February, is split into three terms. The school day officially runs from 9am to 3pm, although the starting time varies. There are five main subject areas taught in primary – Myanmar language, Mathematics, English, Science and General Studies. The latter includes life skills, social sciences and civic education. In addition to the aforementioned end-of-year exam, chapter test are administered monthly at the school level.

The DEPT reports that all primary level teachers and 90% of secondary teachers are certified¹⁶. According to MOE regulations, primary school teachers in the state sector require a one year ‘Certificate in Education’ from one of Myanmar’s 20 Teachers Colleges. A ‘Diploma in Education’ qualifies a teacher to work in secondary school and requires an additional year at the Teachers’ College along with one-year of practical teaching at the primary level. Teachers holding a Bachelor’s degree can attend Teachers’ College for a further year to qualify as either primary or secondary teacher. Parts of these courses can be completed through correspondence. High school level teachers must attend one of the two Institutes of Education in order to qualify. According to Ito and Katsuaki (2006), at Teachers’ College, most classrooms have 70-80 students per class; students are overloaded with course work that lacks relevancy to the classroom setting, and have inadequate library resources to support their study.

While the official language of instruction in state schools is Myanmar, the government itself has been printing text books in 5 ethnic languages and has publicly said that ethnic languages are important. This new attitude presents an opportunity for integrating other languages into the classroom. The official language of instruction throughout the state-sponsored school system is Myanmar (Burmese). With over 100 languages spoken in the country by an estimated 30% of the children, educational success is called into question for ethnic minority children who do not have exposure to the Myanmar language and whose parents may not be able to support Myanmar literacy at home. In recent years, a small pilot program by UNICEF is promoting new forms of teaching Burmese as a second language to ethnic minority children. Though they have found some success with this program it has yet to be scaled up.

According to UNESCO, the pupil-teacher ratio, primary in Myanmar was 28.22:1 as of 2010. Its highest value over the past 39 years was 58.14:1 in 1987, while its lowest value was 28.22:1 in 2010¹⁷. The Myanmar HH survey 2007 measured pupil to teacher ratio across the country at primary school as 30:1. This figure, quite low, does not capture the variation. The ratio ranges from 20:1 in East Shan state to 38:1 in Rakhine state. For middle and high school it is 30:1 for middle school and 39:1 respectively with variation from 38:1 in Tanintharyi state to 97:1 in Kayin State. There is no breakdown of rural versus urban, though ratios appear to be much higher in urban areas.

¹⁶ Department of Education Planning and Training, “Brief Presentation on Basic Education,” Presented at Educational Thematic Working Group Meeting, January 24, 2011.

¹⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics. <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/myanmar/pupil-teacher-ratio>

Transition rates are low between primary and secondary school. According to the MICS only 58% of children who are eligible attend secondary school. Approximately only one quarter of those who complete primary school will go on to middle school¹⁸. Though education is free by law, the various fees associated with school attendance, roughly 50 to 250 USD, increase by grade level. And, combined with the dearth of middle schools, these fees have been shown to be out-of-reach for many families.¹⁹ Other critical factors that inhibit access and transition include labour migrations, pressure for children to engage in domestic and wage-earning activities, poor health and nutrition, conflict in border areas, vulnerability to natural disaster and parent or student dissatisfaction.

Monastic Education

Monastic schools are an integral part of the Myanmar National Action Plan and overseen by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In 1997 there were about 1,500 registered monastery schools teaching about 93,000 students. In the 2008-09 academic year there were 1,443 registered schools teaching 190,000 students at the primary and secondary levels. The total number of registered monastery schools has stayed about the same, while the total number of students accessing these institutions has increased dramatically. Primarily this is related to the relatively low (or no) cost of the monastic schools. These tend to be concentrated in predominantly Buddhist lowlands as well as in historically important Buddhist areas, such as Mandalay, Sagaing and Mon state. Registration of monastic centres with the Ministry of Religious Affairs is not universal and there are likely a hundred or so unregistered monastery education centres across the country.

Financial support for monastery schools is raised through contributions from local donors and business and, to a small extent, international NGOs and funding organisations. This means that head monks and school committees dedicate significant amounts of time to secure basic operating costs. Teacher salaries are generally extremely low, sometimes consisting of wages in-kind, and many schools lack appropriate and necessary equipment such as desks and chairs. For the most part, monastic schools are free to attend and leadership tends to try to minimize any fees associated with attendance including stationery and school lunches. Consequently, monastic schools are widely understood to be a safety net for the extremely poor.

Of the almost 200,000 students, the majority attend primary school and far fewer are enrolled in lower secondary and secondary levels. Most of the students remain lay students, not initiated as novices or nuns. Incorporating the government's standard curriculum, monastic school students participate in government-sponsored examinations. Some schools hold the examinations themselves, while in other areas students must go to a nearby government school to take the exam.

Teachers in monastery schools are not required by law to attain a certificate in education. They are generally recruited from the local area and may even be former students of the school itself and have varying levels of education. In UNICEF targeted areas, previously, monastic teachers were invited to in-service teacher training conducted by the MOE. A

¹⁸Thein Lwin, "Education and Democracy in Burma: Decentralization and Classroom-Level Educational Reform, International Forum for Democratic Studies, May 2007

¹⁹Pyoe Pin Program, Myanmar Youth Forum and Phaung Daw Oo Basic Integrated Monastic High School, "Teaching-Learning and Operational experiences in Fifty Monastic Schools across Myanmar." 2011.

2011 study on fifty monastic schools found that most teachers have received a Bachelor's degree or were enrolled in university distance education while working as a teacher. Though, some had attained only basic education.

Ethnic Education Departments

Ethnic minority areas of Myanmar dominate the highland border areas of the country. Ongoing conflict over autonomy has plagued many of these areas since the time of Myanmar's independence from British colonial rule. Most groups have now signed ceasefire agreements with Myanmar's Government. These areas include an estimated 2 million people. It is clear that Ethnic Education Departments deliver important services to hard-to-reach children. With strategic support, these services can be significantly enhanced.

In some regions, ceasefire groups' education departments operate schools entirely outside of the government system. In Mon State, for instance, the Mon National Education Committee is responsible for 12,000 students in 154 primary schools and 3 high schools and provides 789 teachers. Other ceasefire groups operate systems for which data are not available. Some of the national ceasefire groups have their own systematic teacher training programs.

In ethnic minority areas experiencing ongoing conflict, ethnic groups operate education departments in refugee camps and communities of internally-displaced and migrant members. Having been supported by UN agencies, INGOs and foreign technical experts, the Karen Education Department is well-developed. Mostly through the KTWG, 1130 schools served 103,964 students in 2009/10, and ran a teacher training institution conducting both pre- and in-service training.

Importantly, many schools managed by ethnic minority leadership structures use mother tongue as the medium. While some schools teach Myanmar language as well, they emphasize mother tongue maintenance and have often developed their own curriculum.

Civil Society Education Actors

In addition to the four avenues²⁰ for children to access basic education, a number of civil society actors are providing a range of education services. These include National NGOs, self-help groups, CBOs, professional organisations, and faith-based organisations. They are active across the country and tend to concentrate their energy in social welfare activities.²¹ Though there are some political groups, and rights oriented and advocacy groups, few policy initiatives are well coordinated.

These local groups engage in the development of mother-tongue curricula and children's books; train monastery and community school teachers; manage local scholarships programs or school supplies donations for disadvantaged children; realize comprehensive school programs in the arts and athletics; run hygiene programs in rural schools; operate ECCD centres in areas not covered by any INGO or UN agency; provide free tuition classes; create teachers' manuals to support better use of the government curriculum and initiate and execute programs that get parents more involved in their children's learning.

Financial and technical support for local organisations comes from various sources. Some with paid staff, usually headquartered in Yangon, gain support from international donor

²⁰ MEC activities will not support the growing number of fee paying private schools as MEC's target is marginalized and poor children.

²¹Directory of Local Non-Governmental Organisations (LNGOs) in Myanmar. LNGO Directory 2009.

organisations and religious networks. Many CBOs raise funds in local communities or have secured the patronage of well-to-do local companies or businesspeople. Many of these organisations are not registered with the government - a barrier to accessing technical assistance from the UN, government and even INGOs. These civil society groups, have, without much external support, assumed some burden of assisting children to access school, remain in school, to improve learning and provide alternatives to school-based education.

3.2.3. Problem Analysis

Currently the education system is characterised by poor quality, outdated pedagogy, weak coordination and lack of geographic coverage. Though new education policy has been called for by the parliament and the CESR process is well underway, government education sector officials have little experience in drafting such policy and the Ministry of Education currently has limited resources at its disposal with which to bring about practical country-wide reform. In addition to this, the current efforts of UN, INGOs and civil society organisations remain under-resourced and fragmented, despite encouraging recent movements towards better cooperation and collaboration.

There are a complex range of factors that impact on children in Myanmar accessing and completing quality education, some of which are discussed briefly below.

Poverty

Poverty remains a key factor preventing educational access and outcomes in Myanmar. An estimated one quarter of Myanmar's 62.4 million²² people live in poverty, and this figure rises to 73 per cent in some minority ethnic areas²³. While state-run school is free by law, there remain numerous direct costs to families, such as enrolment fees, school supplies, uniforms and school levies. Monastic, ethnic and non-government schools are important complementary education providers and are often accessible to poorer students who would not otherwise receive an education. Monastic schools, for example, are often viewed as an education safety net for the poor due to the low (means-based contribution) or nil cost to parents. The overall number of students accessing these schools has increased dramatically despite the number of schools remaining largely the same. Approximately three per cent of children in primary school attend monastic schools.²⁴

Complementary systems serve to address an important gap in service delivery that the Government system alone is currently unable to fill. These systems, however, are under-resourced and face many of the same problems experienced in the education sector more broadly, including poorly trained teachers and administrators, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of school supplies. In the Monastic system, for example, less than 50% of teachers are properly trained.

To improve education access and quality for the poorest children in Myanmar at the current time, it is essential that complementary systems are supported to improve the services they provide. Targeted interventions are needed in monastic, ethnic and community schools to improve education access and quality for some of the poorest children in Myanmar to

²² International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook Database*, October 2012.

²³ UNDP and Myanmar Government, *Independent Household Living Conditions Assessment*, 2010.

²⁴ UNICEF, *Pre-appraisal Report on MDEF*. 23.

enable the complementary system to provide a better education to those currently outside the reach of the Government system.

Conflict

Civil conflict has been ongoing in Myanmar for 60 years, severely undermining development. Ethnic minorities make up 32 per cent of the population and face unequal access to even the minimal services that are available to the ethnic majority. While ethnic conflict is ongoing, most groups have negotiated cease-fire agreements. These areas are estimated to include two million people. In some of these areas, ethnic education departments operate schooling systems outside of the government system. Schooling systems managed by ethnic education departments often teach in mother tongue, use their own curriculum and have their own teacher training institutions. There is a lack of schools in ethnic areas (there is one school per 25 villages in ethnic areas, compared to one school per two villages in other parts of the country).

Education can play an important role as a connector in peace building and help to deliver peace dividends through improved service delivery in former conflict zones, though this alone is not sufficient for a sustained peace, which will need political and socio-economic processes and improvements to take place as well. Similarly, exclusionary education practices can undermine progress on peace by reinforcing and exacerbating social divisions. It is critical at this juncture in Myanmar's history that education interventions which prioritise conflict sensitivity and conflict transformation are supported to build social cohesion and stability and help lay the foundations for a lasting peace.

The education context in ethnic areas presents both challenges and opportunities for improving basic education in Myanmar. Challenges exist in ethnic education systems, as elsewhere, to ensure adequate access and quality. Further, there is a need to strengthen convergence with the Government system to ensure that students educated in ethnic systems are able to take advantage of further education pathways and employment opportunities which may exist outside of their ethnic area. Engagement with ethnic education systems presents invaluable opportunities to learn from the experience of ethnic education stakeholders, for example around mother-tongue instruction, without which comprehensive education sector reform is not possible. As a result, there is presently a need for development interventions that will improve education access and quality in ethnic areas and also provide platforms for the inclusion of ethnic perspectives in policy discourse.

Policy

Until recently, education policy in Myanmar has been centrally mandated and civil society did not play a role in its construction. As a result, both the Government and civil society lack experience in consultative policy-making responsive to the needs of communities. Further, little data exist on which either can draw to inform policy formulation. Improving education policy is essential for sustainable education sector reform that will benefit the children of Myanmar in the long term.

The 2012 commitment by the Government of Myanmar to undertake a Comprehensive Education Sector Review, the first review of education in Myanmar in 30 years, provides a valuable opportunity for civil society to participate in public policy construction and sector

reform more broadly. To do so influentially and credibly requires civil society to approach policy advocacy in an organised and well informed manner. Given the fragmented character of civil society in Myanmar and civil society groups' limited experience in policy engagement, there is a risk that civil society's engagement in policy construction will be piecemeal, lacking an evidence base on which to build a credible advocacy position, and ineffective overall. This risk presents an opportunity for development interventions to play an important facilitation and support role to improve civil society's efficacy in policy engagement. A platform for the establishment of civil society coalitions is needed, as is financial assistance and capacity development to support capabilities that international research has demonstrated are a necessary for civil society to influence public policy: research, understanding the policy-making process, organisational development, and advocacy skills.

As mentioned previously, the Government of Myanmar's experience in evidenced-based and responsive public policy construction is limited, as is its experience engaging with civil society in the policy arena. To develop sector policy that is appropriate to the needs of stakeholders and conducive to sustainable improvements in education, it is essential that the Government of Myanmar's capacity in needs-based policy formulation grows and its links to civil society stakeholders are strengthened. Through processes such as the CESR, the Government of Myanmar has recently demonstrated its openness to a more responsive approach to policy construction. This openness provides an opportunity for international actors to support the Government's efforts, improve their capacity, and strengthen links with civil society.

Disability

As outlined in AusAID's Education Engagement Strategy, disability is another factor that prevents access to education. Globally, children with disabilities are less likely to start school and they have lower rates of retention and completion.²⁵ Rigid curricula, inadequate training and support for teachers, physical barriers and negative attitudes are all barriers preventing children with disabilities being fully included in education. According to the 'First Myanmar Basic Disability Survey 2008-2009,' conducted by The Leprosy Mission International in conjunction with Myanmar Department of Social Welfare, 62.9% of people with disabilities, aged 5 and above, had never attended school. And of those that did attend school, only 35% progressed beyond primary school. As the first comprehensive poll on disability prevalence and conditions for people with disabilities, colloquial definitions of various disabilities may have resulted in underestimating the prevalence of individuals with developmental and mental challenges. Even so, the rate of primary completion is very similar to the poorest quintile as reported by MICS.

²⁵ World Health Organisation, *World Report on Disability*, 2011. 206–207.

Table 2 - Children with Special Needs

School Type	Total Children with Disabilities*	% of Disabled Students	% of Total School Enrolment^
Special Schools	708	3.5%	100.0%
Government Schools	10,268	50.8%	0.1%
Monastic School	9,227	45.7%	4.6%
Total Children with Disabilities	20,203	100%	0.28%

*Source: UNESCO, Myanmar Country Report August 2009.

^Based on 7,000,000 Statistic reference by UNESCO and 200,000 in Monastery by MRA.

According to UNESCO, only 708 children with disabilities in the entire country have access to special schools where teachers and caregivers are equipped with the necessary specialization. Accordingly, those children with disabilities that do attend school are most likely to attend either government or monastery schools.

The Government of Myanmar has developed A Myanmar Education For All National Action Plan 2003-2015 to improve access, quality and relevance particularly of primary and lower secondary education, and to promote literacy and life skills for youths not in school and adults. Children with physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as other vulnerable groups, are specifically recognised as a target group in inclusion strategies.²⁶ Despite this plan, education services for children with disabilities are still limited. While some disabled children are able to access education (whether appropriate to their needs or not) the vast majority, or 62.9 per cent, of people with disabilities aged five and above have never attended school.²⁷

Currently, the education prospects of students with disability in Myanmar are very poor. Interventions that address disability inclusion from multiple perspectives – awareness, participation, comprehensive accessibility – are needed. Such interventions must work not only in education facilities, but also in the community to challenge existing attitudes and reduce the stigma associated with disability. Similarly, greater efforts are needed to translate overarching policy commitments into better service delivery.

Natural Disaster

As evidenced by Cyclone Nargis in 2008, an earthquake in Keng Tong in 2011 and the flooding in Magway in 2011, lack of infrastructure and institutional capacity along with generalized poverty leave Myanmar very vulnerable to future climate change-related and natural disasters. Such disasters lead to loss of livelihood and migration. Moreover, protracted conflict in several ethnic minority areas of the country leads to forced displacement and community instability. Such emergencies severely impact access and quality of education services.

Gender

According to the 2009-10 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), there is no overall difference in the attendance of boys and girls at the primary or secondary school levels in Myanmar. However, regional differences exist and girls are at a disadvantage in access to

²⁶ Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education, *Country Report: Myanmar Education Development Strategy Focusing on Inclusive Education*, October 2008, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/myanmar_NR08.pdf, accessed 15 May 2012.

²⁷ UNESCO, *Myanmar Country Report*, 2009 as cited in MEC design, 15.

secondary school in Rakhine and Shan (North). In addition, the monastic schooling system, regarded as an education safety net for the poor, has 7 per cent more boys than girls enrolled. One explanation given for this difference is that families experiencing economic hardship will choose to send their son to school over their daughter and monastic schools are often the least costly schooling option.²⁸ While school enrolment rates are relatively equal between boys and girls, women are more likely to be illiterate than men.²⁹ In addition, due to the lack of schools in ethnic areas (there is one school per 25 villages in ethnic areas, compared to one school per two villages in other parts of the country) many girls need to travel long distances, which increases the risk of sexual and gender-based violence.³⁰ As the situation outlined above illustrates, there is a significant need to improve gender equality in education in Myanmar, including in the complementary system. By addressing gender inequality in the complementary system, education interventions have an opportunity to improve the education prospects for children in poverty-affected circumstances who are currently suffering pronounced gender inequality.

Data availability

An absence of accurate data and statistics presents a significant challenge for gaining a holistic picture of the education landscape in Myanmar. Improving the volume and quality of data available to inform policy construction and program implementation in Myanmar is crucial to enable sustainable improvements in the sector. Opportunities now exist through the CESR and discrete research activities to contribute to this knowledge base and in doing so support the development of policy and programming informed by credible evidence. Research under the CESR, for example, will be used to develop a fully costed education sector plan in 2014 which will be a critical exercise for shaping Government expenditure on education which has historically been low and a major contributor to the deterioration of Myanmar's education system over the last 60 years. The international community has an important strategic opportunity to offer financial support and technical assistance to improving data availability and quality in Myanmar at the present time and laying the foundations for positive and lasting change in the sector.

3.2.4. The Response of Donors and Other Actors

Until recently, UNICEF and the main donors that support it (Australia, the EU and UK Norway and Denmark) can be considered the major supporters to the education sector, working primarily with the Ministry of Education (MOE) along with limited support to other education providers such as the Monastic School System. In 2012, UNESCO has re-entered the country working with UNICEF in policy level dialogue and education sector reform. The Japanese government through JICA has been the only bilateral donor that has been able to work directly with the Ministry of Education focussing on the training of teachers and support to school administration in the promotion of child centred approaches to education (CCA). Their program was completed in 2012. There has for some years been limited NGO (both local and international) programming in education, in particular with early childhood development, non-formal education, transition programs from early childhood to primary school and support to elements of the Monastic School system. Following Cyclone Nargis, there has been an increased interest from other actors in the education sector including a

²⁸ MEC, *Description of Action*. 16.

²⁹ UNFPA, *Gender Briefing Kit*, 2011.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

creative partnership amongst the three founding agencies of the MEC. In addition, there have been some efforts to increase coordination amongst different education focussed agencies. This has included the development of the Education Thematic Working Group (ETWG) which brings together government, non-government, UN and civil society agencies involved in the sector and a working group looking at the development of teacher competencies (facilitated by Pyoe Pin³¹). The ETWG operates through a number of technical sub groups in ECCD, NFE, Teacher Education and Disaster Preparedness. Through the CESR process, there has been increased coordination with the establishment of a Development Partners (DP) group for education stakeholders, including donors, financial institutions and INGOs and the formation of the Ministry-led Joint Education Sector Working Group. In these relatively recent institutional relationships, the MEC offers a unique opportunity to bring greater coherence and collaboration amongst a wide range of other education focussed agencies. The table below highlights the shifting education landscape and the areas in which the MEC aims to make a substantial contribution.

Table 3 - Current Education Landscape

Current Education Landscape	MDEF/ UNICEF	MEC
QUALITY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching practice - School administration and management - Community engagement in education - Human resource and leadership development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on government systems - National planning and policy development - Child-Friendly School approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on complementary systems - Program models for ECCD and transitions to primary - Minimum standards for teaching practices, school and ECCD administration - Leadership development within schools - Community involvement in education - Quality learning environments - Research and data collection
EQUITY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusivity - Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited number of townships and coverage - Government and school-based ECCD - Second chance education programming - Policy dialogues - Research - Information systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of coverage - hard-to-reach areas - vulnerable populations - children with disabilities, girls, poor, children of mobile families - children out of school - Second chance education opportunities
HARMONIZATION AND COLLABORATION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financing - Complementarity - Context-sensitive response - Civil Society Organisation voice - Policy consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education Thematic Working Group (ETWG) - JESWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation for channelling funding - Platform for civil society inclusion - Inclusion of complementary systems (monastic schools, ethnic education departments) - Systems of quality control - Proven and scalable practice
AID ARCHITECTURE		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New actors and more money - Increased focus on government reform - Conditionality - Sector-wide approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platform for donors to invest in the formal sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased investment potential and absorptive capacity - Flexible and responsive - Local actors can inform programming and donor policy

³¹Pyoe Pin is a British Council (DFID funded) programming aimed at strengthening civil society

3.3. Rationale for the MEC

Based on the analysis above, there is a clear rationale for further education sector investment. The MEC responds strategically to the issues discussed in the preceding sections. This is illustrated in detail in the descriptions of the five core components of MEC, which provide a targeted response to the identified areas of need (see sections 2.3.2 and 4.6).

MEC members will be able to fill critical gaps in coverage and address quality needs that will not only enhance learning impacts, but will keep students in school longer. More broadly, by reducing barriers to education and thereby increasing enrolment in school and improving the standard of education, MEC will have a marked medium to long term effect improving education outcomes. Increasing access to basic education will assist Myanmar to reach targets for both the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All (EFA) initiative. Increasingly urgent is the need for a mechanism that will enhance collaboration and coordination amongst the growing number of education focussed agencies around achieving MDG and EFA targets and sector reform. MEC is well placed to facilitate a broad stakeholder engagement in this process.

The MEC provides current and potential development partners with an effective vehicle to respond to the barriers that currently prevent many of Myanmar's children accessing quality basic education. Investment in the MEC will enable all development partners to provide strategic development assistance to a nation at the threshold of significant political, economic, and social change. For donors, a single platform from which to distribute funds will reduce administrative requirements and increase aid efficiency.

Improved policy development and service delivery is central to creating good governance in Myanmar; the MEC will work with civil society to develop a platform for discussion and debate around policy and accountability challenges. It will support civil society in identifying and using channels to bring their contribution to policy-makers, for example through the CESR. This approach will require civil society to have well prepared evidence based positions and in turn will be a step to increasing transparency and responsiveness in those agencies through dialogue, and the MEC will assist in developing this evidence base by providing support for research and through its own monitoring, evaluation and learning practices.

MEC, as a platform for coordination, will actively create opportunities and develop processes for these various providers to come together, for a more effective education system. Systematic coordination and consultation will promote conditions that enable a growing sense of ownership that characterizes effective support to education reform.³² And, with the capacity to harmonize evaluation techniques across the subsectors, impacts of such coordination will be measured.

For donors participating in the Multi-donor Education Fund, MEC provides an opportunity to compound program impact of their support to the formal sector while strengthening civil society participation at all levels, building collaborative progress towards sector-wide

³²Gillies, John, "The Power of Persistence: Education Reform and Aid Effectiveness, Case Studies in Long-Term Education Reform," USAID Educational Quality and Improvement Program, November 2010.

planning and evaluation. For other potential donors, MEC will be a mechanism that will provide access to a number of diverse members engaging in evidence-based programming.

3.3.1. Building on Lessons Learned

The experience of partnership of the three founding agencies in their Nargis programs has shaped MEC's development (see Footnote 1). Lessons learned from this experience, as outlined in the table below, contributed to the planning for the far more comprehensive approach to education encapsulated in MEC.

Table 4 - Lessons Learned

Issues	Lessons Learned
Community cohesion	The challenges of providing children with a quality and relevant education are powerful factors in creating a common understanding within communities; helping community leaders and parents to understand and appreciate the need to work together rather than focus on the points of difference that can cause mistrust and an unwillingness to work together.
Community mobilisation	Project sustainability will be dependent on the community being encouraged to contribute more to education activities and to gradually take on management and implementation responsibility for these activities. The effective and efficient management of the grants by the School Committee in many communities, coupled with the substantial contributions made by these Committees to supplement grants, have demonstrated the willingness of communities to accept more responsibility. The project needs to capitalise on this in the next phase.
Appropriate pace	Due to the recognised need to build trust and confidence in communities, an appropriate pace in the development of strong and workable relations across all groups in the community were found to be necessary.
Multi-pronged, flexible approach	Creating a child friendly school environment is dependent on developing a strong and workable partnership between children, the community and the project. By using a multi-pronged, flexible approach that has been responsive to lessons learned along the way and making changes as needed, the project has been successful in creating the enabling environment needed to bring about quality changes for children.
Community openness to new approaches	A critical mass of awareness is needed in a community before noticeable attitudinal and behavioural change starts to happen. This is especially true when this change is related to traditional beliefs and values that have been in place for long periods of time. The preparedness of communities to accept new teaching methodologies could indicate that this level of awareness has been reached, creating a platform from which more rapid change should emanate.
Importance of training	Training should be viewed as more than simply a way of raising capacity; it is a vital tool in engaging people's enthusiasm and involvement. The thirst for training and intellectual stimulation from those involved in project activities (principals, teachers, mothers, committee members) is insatiable. In Myanmar many people have had no education or their education was cut short due to poverty and the pressure to earn an income. Training provides intellectual stimulation, the opportunity to work at new tasks and increased status and respect in the community.
Role of 'champions'	Identifying and training influential "champions" as advocates for child-centred approaches is a strategy that should be used to attract widespread support and help develop a strong support base. This has already happened to a certain extent through the principals of the schools. Further exposure to these approaches and more training could further enhance the role that principals and other identified 'champions' could take in influencing attitudes in communities and strengthening the uptake and acceptance of change within the communities.
Learning from pilot areas	The previous AusAID funded Monastic Education Support project provided an opportunity for the project to pilot trialling/modelling the introduction of new methodologies and approaches in monastic schools and their communities.

3.3.2. Unique Value of the MEC

By virtue of being a consortium with broad networks amongst NGOs and civil society, the MEC is a particularly useful mechanism for addressing key constraints to education sector development as outlined previously. In particular MEC adds value in the following areas:

Reaching the Underserved – Through its combined and extensive programming experience MEC members have a distinct comparative advantage in the delivery of essential education services, including ECCD, vocational training, NFE, professional development for teachers and caregivers. MEC’s structure fosters the flexibility for critical, directed interventions for difficult-to-reach populations including rural and urban poor, children with disabilities, girls, OVC’s, and non-Myanmar speaking ethnic communities.

Innovation and Effectiveness – All MEC members draw from proven practices in Myanmar and beyond, while piloting approaches and tools. MEC’s support to full inclusion of local organisations means that locally-appropriate interventions can be scaled up once proven impactful. Replicable models can be shared among more organisations, who can multiply their impact.

Scale – MEC members will have access to all states and divisions. As MEC develops, membership of more LNGOs and CBOs will widen geographic reach. MEC members’ track records demonstrate credibility, and the competence to maintain relationships with CBOs, communities and authorities at all levels. Sharing resources, methodologies, tools, replicable models and lessons learned among organisations will contribute to larger-scale impact.

Complementarities – MEC’s programming and coordination will foster the development of a shared sector-wide approach. MEC’s design complements the Quality Basic Education Program Framework designed by partners of the Multi-donor Education Fund and UNICEF. Through the Education Thematic Working Group and potentially regional platforms, MEC members will bring relevant experience and field perspective into policy-level discussions, generating positive changes in the legal and operational environment. MEC partners also address broader development, in particular hygiene that has a direct impact over children’s school attendance their learning potential and the broader community.

Diversification– MEC offers an alternative funding mechanism for donors, enabling support to a variety of partners, NGOs and CBOs through one channel.

3.3.3. MEC Theory of Change

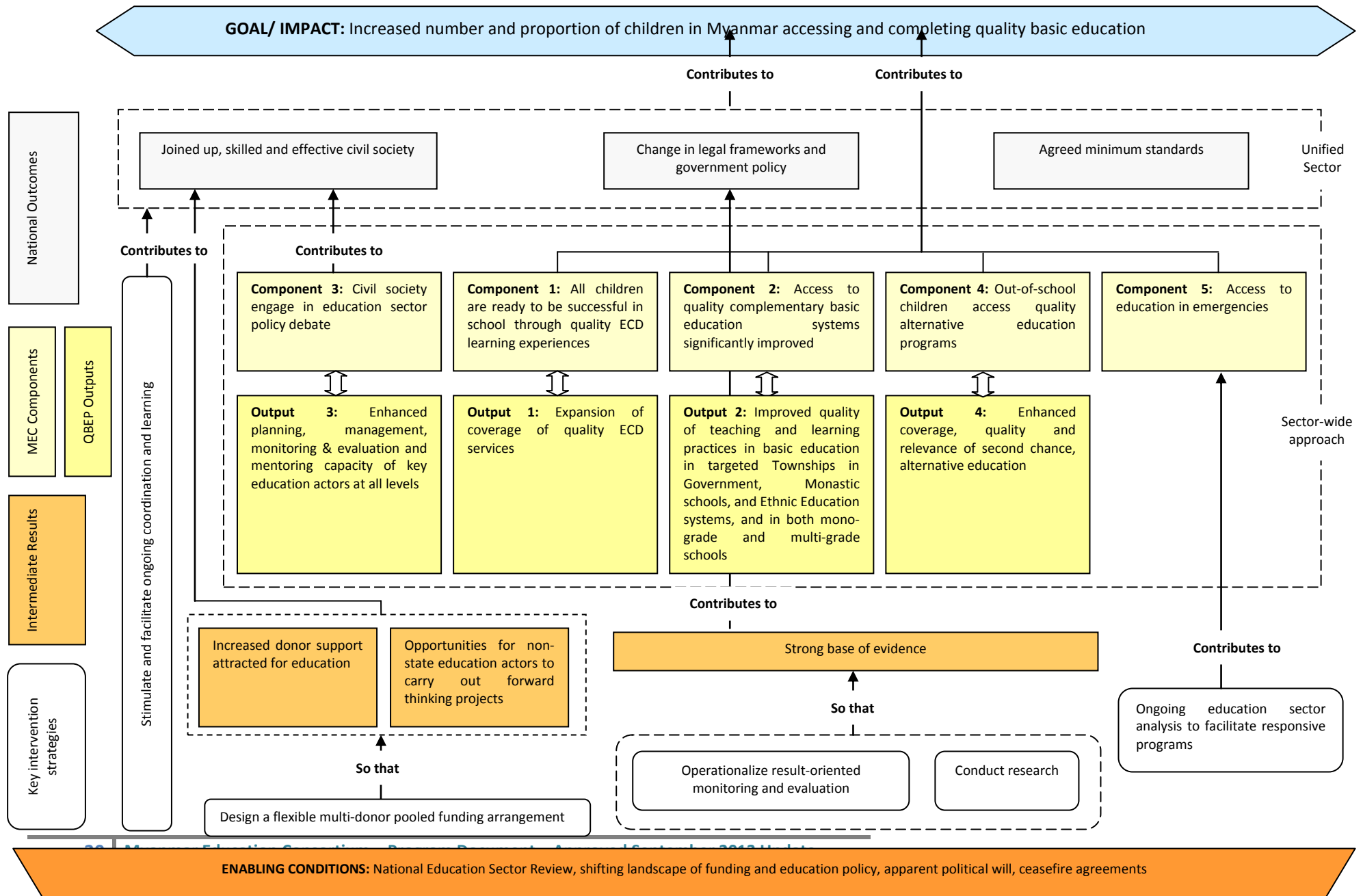
In addition to the specific results of its program, MEC’s theory of change links at the impact level with the UNICEF managed QBEP. Donors and all those involved in education sector reform can be assured that any support to either QBEP or MEC will contribute to the same final goal. The MEC will actively seek change by:

- Being leaders in sector-wide programming development and bringing local partners to the discussions with arguments developed from a strong evidence base;
- Supporting non-state actors in the sector of basic education to maintain their value to communities in the shifting landscape of funding, education policy and the country’s context; (as increases in funding opportunities and changes in government policies require forward-thinking and longer-term planning as opposed to crisis-driven and otherwise reactive programming);

- Enabling the range of non-state organisations to experiment with innovative approaches and developing their capacity to adapt to changes in their environments;
- Using the experience of MEC and partner organisations to build valuable knowledge for the education sector, identifying and consolidating points of cross-over between non-state and government education activities;
- Promoting and working with coalition partners to develop and monitor the legal and regulatory frameworks such as minimum standards for a range of areas including ECCD, CCA, school management, and parental involvement.

MEC's theory of change has been articulated in the diagram on the following page³³.

³³ The Theory of Change will be revisited by the end of 2013.



4. Detailed Program Description

4.1. Objectives

The detailed Logical Framework for the MEC in Annex B describes the expected impact, goal, outcome and components of the MEC. These are summarised in the following table that also compares them with the UNICEF QPEB:

Table 5 - Program Logic of MEC and QBEP

Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC)	Myanmar Quality Basic Education Program (QBEP)
Goal/ Impact Increased number and proportion of children in Myanmar accessing and completing quality basic education	
Outcome: Innovative, coordinated and quality driven community and complementary education services ensure more children, and particularly the hardest to reach, are ready to enter primary education and greater opportunity exists for children to gain quality learning in complementary education systems	Outcome: Increased number and proportion of children accessing and completing quality basic education in targeted townships
Component 1: All children are ready to be successful in school through quality ECCD learning experiences	Output 1: Expansion of coverage of quality ECCD services
Component 2: Access to quality complementary basic education systems significantly improved	Output 2: Improved quality of teaching and learning practices in basic education in targeted Townships in Government and Monastic schools and in both mono-grade and multi-grade schools
Component 3: Civil society engage in education sector policy debate	Output 3: Enhanced planning, management, monitoring & evaluation and mentoring capacity of key education actors at all levels
Component 4: Out-of-school children access quality alternative education programs	Output 4: Enhanced coverage, quality and relevance of second chance, alternative education
Component 5: Access to education in emergencies	

4.2. Overall Principles and Approach

The MEC design adopts the 'Quality Basic Education Program Framework' as a means to facilitate increased coordination at the sector level while enabling the possibility of marking gains in education across the board. As the shared use of the QBEP framework puts education organisations 'on the same page' with respect to outcomes and outputs, the program logic of MEC members will mirror and supplement that of UNICEF towards increased sector integration.

Through its granting, coordination and capacity enhancement activities MEC will:

- Increase access to ECCD programs through supporting innovative community based approaches that are relevant and often specific to a particular context;
- Increase access to, enrolment and completion of primary school education by supporting programs that enable children to be 'ready' for entry to primary school and help primary schools to be ready for children;
- Improve the quality of education practices in both ECCD programs and complementary primary programs (Monastic System, Ethnic School Systems and Community Schools) by increasing the capacity of schools for child centred teaching and learning and improving management and leadership within schools;
- Increase access to basic education services for marginalized populations including girls, disabled children, ethnic children and children of mobile families through increasing the number of services available and ensuring appropriate support for vulnerable groups;
- Build the capacity of non-state actors engaged in the education sector to develop and implement effective education programs, and to use their evidence base to inform the education policy debate by building forums for the sharing of best practices and for engagement with the sector reform dialogue.

Founded upon the following guiding principles, MEC will develop governance structures and regularly assess how the relationships are working in practice:

Principle #1: Impartiality

Governance structures will reinforce and protect processes based on impartiality.

Principle #2: Representation and Participatory Equity

Real participation needs structured process. Partners need to know that their participation will be integrated into decision-making and will result in real impacts.

Principle #3: Communication

Partners communicate directly, respectfully and candidly with each other.

Principle #4: Transparency

This will include open calls for proposals, transparent selection criteria of grant mechanisms, presence of civil society representatives on the Board of Trustees and the establishment of grievance mechanisms.

Principle #5: Mutual accountability

This will include the integration of community feedback mechanisms, information sharing, sharing mechanisms that will discuss results and lessons learned regular auditing and performance tracking systems for the Board of Trustees and the members.

Principle #6: Managing for results

MEC will promote result-oriented proposals, monitoring and reporting, in clearly articulated and harmonised Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks.

Principle #7: Ownership

MEC is committed to promoting local education actors, as a growing proportion of funds will go to local organisations, generating a healthy balance of service providers of different sizes.

Principle #8: Joint Action

Partnership with shared accountability calls for planning and acting together, including joint evaluation, implementation, and reporting to donors and others.

Principle #9: Alignment/ harmonization

MEC will align with Government education plans and priorities, seeking synergy with UNICEF's Program, and supporting the development of a sector-wide approach with all actors.

Principle #10: Vision

Partners will not only share common development approaches, but will seek ways to operate the partnership with shared operational priorities. As such, they will work to agree on how to address all partnership related issues: complex issues such as finances, program activities, information sharing, as well as basic issues such as meeting schedules and logistics.

4.3. MEC Phasing

The first phase of MEC's development occurs over a four year period. At the end of each calendar year, a joint review to both monitor progress and to fine-tune the design will be conducted, overseen by the Program Steering Committee at the end of 2013, later by the Board of Trustees.

4.3.1. Year 1: 2013

The MEC agreement was signed 25 February, 2013. The first year of operation – calendar year 2013 - will entail a comprehensive scale up of the activities of the three founding agencies as well as all key fundamental steps towards the setting up of the MEC grant and coordination mechanism. These will include:

- An organisational mapping of the scope of existing civil society organisations and complementary education systems
- The recruitment and organisation of the MEC Team
- Definition of the Governance structure of the MEC, to be approved by the Program Steering Committee.
- Finance and Grants, Capacity Building and MERL systems designs will be approved by the Program Steering Committee and organised by the MEC Team.
- Presently, four grant funding mechanisms are under consideration:
 1. Development Fund: for larger and longer term programs
 2. Innovation Fund: for smaller and short term innovations with possibilities for scale up.
 3. Education in Emergency Fund: for immediate education emergency response.
 4. Strategic Facilitation Fund: for small investments in actions that unlock critical sector processes.
- MERL Systems will incorporate all sub-grant and MEC indicators into the overall MEC logical framework, guaranteeing a coherent and consistent programming approach and focus.
- The capacity building strategy will contain the following elements:
 1. Capacity assessments of partner organisations conducted in a participatory manner, resulting in shared ownership of identified capacity building interventions;
 2. Technical and program development capacity building for partners to support quality proposal development and implementation
 3. Technical assistance (based on assessments) built into grants and other mechanisms, delivered through the most appropriate means, e.g.

consultants, exchange visits between partners' programs, workshops, mentoring ;

4. A collection of tools and mechanisms and a system that will incentivize sharing of resources, materials, methodologies, evaluations, and lessons learned among civil society organisations, Myanmar and international NGOs.

4.3.2. Years 2-4: 2014-2017

- This phase will begin in 2014 and see the full operation of the fund and collaborative mechanisms of the MEC. Management will be the responsibility of the MEC Team with oversight and governance of the MEC being the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The MEC Team will remain under the contractual auspices of Save the Children³⁴. However, programs of the three founding members, should they wish to apply for new funding, will need to pass through the same processes as other applicants/partners.
- A full monitoring and evaluation system will be in place within the MEC Team along with a capacity to provide ongoing technical support and capacity development for local partner agencies.
- The development of an advocacy strategy, including the set up of the most appropriate platform for local civil society groups to interact with the ETWG and other education focussed forums and to feed into formal mechanisms;
- The first general call for proposals by the MEC. These proposals will need to contribute to the achievement of targets in the five component areas. Grants will be approved by the Board of Trustees (see section 5 for further details) and aim to build the capacity of civil society groups to support initiatives in ECCD, primary education and non formal education. Given the limited capacity of some local agencies the MEC will play an active role in building both technical and organisational capacity of local partners.
- Stand alone activities such as teacher conferences and networking activities to increase the exchange of technical ideas and innovation.
- The conclusion of the founding agencies' programs by the end of Year 2;

This planning process allows for gathering relevant input through consultative activities, conducting necessary organisational assessments, preparing and running relevant capacity building programs, the development of grants procedures and establishing a thoughtful governance mechanism.

Table 6 - MEC Development

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
Program	Organisational Mapping	M&E and Program Learning form the base of the advocacy strategy.			
	3 founding partners deliver their programs.				
		Pooled funds, CSOs, Myanmar and international NGOs ³⁵ deliver programs.			
Management	Program Steering Committee	Board of Trustees			
	Save the Children Contracting agency			Legal Status to be confirmed	
	Design and establish Fund Mechanisms	Growing grant portfolio with more impact and broader collaboration and partnerships.			
	Establish MEC Team	Board of Trustees, MEC members, and MEC Team set the MEC agenda and strategies.			

4.4. Partner and Member Selection

Critical to the operation of the MEC is the process of creating MEC Membership guidelines and criteria, which will be developed in 2013. These will be developed, refined, and confirmed by the MEC Team, and approved by the Program Steering Committee. MEC capacity development staff and grants officers will support interested civil society organisations to enhance their capacity over time through hands-on support, peer mentoring and specific training. Grants will also be considered for partnership initiatives between “coaching” or “mentoring” partners, and organisations that agree to form a partnership with specific impact, and capacity indicators.

Through these processes, organisations are likely to ‘graduate’ to a category of eligibility for higher grant amounts.

MEC will focus support to partners that display the following characteristics:

- **A context and conflict-sensitive response** that accounts for the ethno linguistic and religious diversity across the country. One-size-fits-all education programming will not meet the needs of Myanmar’s 18 million children;
- **Active coordination** promoting an environment that enables enhanced learning impact. Such coordination includes data sharing, inter-organisational learning and tailored programming³⁶.

³⁵ Incl. sub-grants to founding partners in 2014

³⁶This refers to programming which is specific to a particular area or group and while it could be based on a replicable model, should be tailored according to context

- **Ability to adapt to changes**, as the political and policy environment requires a flexible and responsive approach to what can be rapid change.
- **The innovative capacity of non-state education providers**, who with support can provide significant inputs and have the potential to develop proven and scalable interventions that improve school enrolment, attendance and survival rates while enhancing learning outcomes.
- **Learning embraced for program effectiveness**- demonstrated ability or intent to plan, monitor and evaluate programs, share lessons learned for continuous improvement of program delivery.

4.5. Geographic Focus

The geographic targeting of the first grant initiatives will be decided based on the organisational mapping and existing macro data (later geographic targeting processes will be organised in consensus with the Board of Trustees). The process of developing geographic targeting will be confirmed, considering the following criteria, which reflect the ME fundamental principles:

- balance across Bamar and ethno linguistic minority groups.
- prevalence of poverty
- community interest
- demographic profile (percentage of children under 6)
- access to basic services that compound impacts.

Beneficiary communities of the three founding members have been determined in consultation with the donors.

Founding members have targeted beneficiaries based on their larger organisational programming strategy, poverty measures, service access statistics, demographic profile, community motivation and permissions by the Myanmar government.

Based on lessons learned, MEC will not make targeting decisions based exclusively on the presence of other organisations. In the post-Nargis Ayeyarwady delta collaboration, agencies found that complementary services in a single community compounded impacts. At the same time, particularly given the paucity of education services nationally, initiating programs where others do not exist can ignite community interest in education creating an environment that enables long-term development.

Annex D lists townships of implementation for the three founding agencies against those for UNICEF and WFP.

In townships where MEC member and UNICEF activities are carried out, township-level coordination will ensure that there is no direct³⁷ overlap. World Vision and UNICEF will be working in three of the same townships. There, field staff will coordinate at the township-level. At the Yangon-level, MEC will seek coordination between MEC members and UNICEF, to ensure coordination on targeting and to identify points for synchronization to intensify impact, and with WFP, because of the MEC's mandate to work in areas of high food insecurity

For Burnet Institute, the Monastic Development Committee, head monks who represent the monastic education schools which are registered under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, will

³⁷ This refers to doing the same activities in the same township.

make decisions for initial project schools. In areas where Burnet and UNICEF both work, coordination will be carried in conjunction with the Township Education Office, as well as at the Yangon-level. In UNICEF townships, monastic teachers will be able to participate in township-level teacher trainings. In these areas, Burnet will complement mainstream education activities with targeted health interventions that focus on building the capacity of the Monastic School system in:

- Building/renovating water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and community education on proper use of facilities through mother’s and parent’s groups;
- Training teachers in how to integrate personal hygiene activities in to day to day classroom activities;
- Training teachers and parents (through the development of active parent teacher or mothers groups) on child development and basic psychosocial support for children, including how to deal with children with psychological developmental and educational challenges.

4.6. Program Components

4.6.1. Component 1: All children are ready to be successful in school through quality ECCD learning

COMPONENT 1	INDICATORS
All children are ready to be successful in school through quality ECCD learning experiences	% of children currently in first grade of primary school who have benefited from an ECCD intervention (disaggregated for girls, boys and children with special needs)
	# of children newly accessing ECCD services (disaggregated for girls, boys and children with special needs)
	Most significant changes in parenting practices

This component ensures that children have the best start in their early years and are well prepared for learning.

The Consortium will support various appropriate models of ECCD programming. Diversity of Myanmar’s population and local contexts means that communities need a response that is fitting in order to make significant impact. Key elements of ECCD programs will be community leadership, technical skills development and financial sustainability. This will be achieved through a variety of complementary interventions, with an emphasis on quality community-managed ECCD services. Innovative programming will be piloted in order to expand reach of quality learning to the inclusion of the most marginalized children. This work will feed into the ECCD Technical Working Group, a sub Group of ETWG, to ensure

cohesion and connection with the development of pre-school policy and systemic professional development for caregivers.

The importance of early childhood programs is well founded. There is abundant worldwide evidence that the most disadvantaged children – whether because of poverty, ethnicity, gender, caste, or rural isolation – experience the most impressive gains from ECCD programs. In addition, ECCD programs can free mothers, caretakers and older siblings to learn and earn, particularly leading to increased participation of women in the labour force³⁸ and better health outcomes for children.

Early Childhood Development includes socialization, readiness for school, the provision of adequate nutrition, nurturing and stimulation within a caring environment for children up to 8 years of age.³⁹

As a part of a ‘life cycle approach’ to education it is clear that ECCD promotes school readiness as a critical step towards longer-term educational success. ECCD has proven to:⁴⁰

- contribute to age appropriate enrolment in grade one
- lower repetition and dropout rates
- lead to higher school attainment and completion
- improve learning achievement
- increase participation of girls in school

It has also been demonstrated that inclusion of children with disabilities in ECCD centres has a considerable impact not only on the life of the individual children, but gives a powerful message to communities and has been seen to change attitude towards disability in many communities⁴¹.

According to UNICEF’s MICS 2009-10⁴², whereas 46 per cent of children in the richest households attend early childhood education, the rate of attendance among the poorest children is as low as 7.6 per cent. It is notable that while 80.7 per cent of children aged five from the richest households are in school, only 63.5 per cent of children from the poorest households have entered primary school. Only 58.3 per cent of children of secondary school age are in secondary school. The rate is as low as 28.2 per cent among children from the poorest households, compared to 85.5 per cent among children from the richest households.

The same report also highlights geographic differences in enrolment rates among States and divisions of Myanmar. Among the country’s states and divisions, the highest rate for children currently attending Grade 1 is found in Tanintharyi with 93 per cent, compared to 58.6 per cent in Shan (North). Primary school-aged children in Tanintharyi are most likely to attend school at 98 per cent, compared to 75.8 per cent in Rakhine. The secondary school attendance rate is as high as 74.7 per cent in Yangon, but only 30.9 per cent in Rakhine.

By working to reach the most remote communities, the MEC program will improve access to education for children from poor areas and from ethno linguistic minority communities.

³⁸ Reference “Added Value” An economic impact of ECCD, Save the Children in Myanmar

³⁹Liana Gertsch (2009)

⁴⁰ Liana Gertsch, *Getting the basics right: Contribution of Early Childhood Development to quality, equity and efficiency in education*(2009), http://www.arnec.net/cos/o.x?ptid=1036083&c=/swt_arnec/articles&func=view&rid=41

⁴¹ Save the Children in Myanmar, Mid Term Evaluation, Amanda Seel and U Aung Tin (2010)

⁴² Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Health, and UNICEF, “Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009-2010,” October 2011.

Output 1.1: Access to community-managed ECCD services meeting minimum standards

OUTPUT 1.1	INDICATORS
Access to community-managed ECCD services meeting minimum standards	# of community-managed ECCD centres set up
	% of community-managed ECCD centres that meet minimum quality standards

The establishment of ECCD services, implemented by the three founding members, usually begins with raising awareness of the importance of child development as a means to mobilize communities. Approaches can include community meetings, information sessions, meetings with local authorities, focus group discussions, video and IEC materials and home visits. Support can be given to communities in terms of infrastructure and materials support, financial inputs to ensure longer term sustainability of ECCD services, and significant capacity building inputs.

A set of core indicators has been jointly developed, with the leadership of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and these will form the basis of quality control.

Of the newly-established centres, approximately three hundred of the community-managed ECCD centres will be newly constructed facilities, the others rented contributed by communities or renovated. All centres will be equipped with proper WASH facilities (latrines and hand washing station). In order to induce healthy behaviours, children will learn from a hygiene curriculum and caregivers will model good behaviour. As evidenced by previous learning in ECCD implementation, good hygiene practice at pre-primary has a direct link to improved hygiene practice in the wider community and a decrease in cases of diarrhoea.

Output 1.2: Access to school-based ECCD services meeting minimum standards in complementary education systems

OUTPUT 1.2	INDICATORS
Access to school-based ECCD services meeting minimum standards	# of school-based ECCDcentres set up
	% of school-based ECCDcentres that meet minimum quality standards

ECCD provision currently focuses on either school-based services within the formal system, DSW pre-school/self-help pre-schools, centre-based services with varying levels of community management, mobile and home-based provision. It would be strategic to pilot and support school-based ECCD programs in complementary education systems and this would therefore be considered for MEC funding.

Output 1.3: Increased awareness of parents and extended families on ECCD

OUTPUT 1.3	INDICATORS
Increased awareness of parents and extended families on ECCD	# of parents and extended family members trained on parenting practices
	% of parents and extended family members trained demonstrating basic knowledge on parenting practices

MEC views ECCD as a process that begins before birth. Targeting parents with children aged three and younger, Parenting Education programs recognize that parents are the first teachers and that the home is the principal learning environment. Through facilitated sessions, parents will gain awareness of the ways that parenting affects their children and build capacity to better support their children’s development. Education sessions include critical information about child development, parenting practice, hygiene, nutrition and safety.

Parenting Education programs will be focused in areas where ECCD centres are currently operating or are in development in order to maximize effectiveness.

Output 1.4: Increased access to capacity building and systematic professional development for ECCD caregivers

OUTPUT 1.4	INDICATORS
Increased access to capacity building and systematic professional development for ECCD caregivers	# of ECCD caregivers trained
	% of ECCD caregivers trained that are demonstrating minimum standards of competency

MEC will ensure that caregivers from complementary ECCD providers, including private, faith-based and community-based agencies, have systematic pre and in service professional development and support. Caregivers are usually selected from the communities where the centres are based and receive training. This encompasses child development, play, learning, language, health and nutrition, disability, first aid, hygiene, safety, parenting, development of teaching and learning materials, behaviour management principles and techniques. UNICEF has developed a monitoring package for ECCD Minimum Standards, and this includes competencies for caregivers. Key areas in these standards include minimum levels of training and educational level; demonstration of applying developmentally appropriate activities; observation, monitoring and recording of children’s development and their language, social emotional, cognitive and physical progress; demonstration of understanding the development needs of children and responding with appropriate activities and actions; demonstration of non-threatening and non-violent behaviour management.

Under the CESR and additionally, the development of the multi Sectoral ECCD Policy MEC proposes to work with Government and DPs to establish professional qualification and training for ECCD caregivers.

Output 1.5: All children experience a ‘smooth transition’ to primary school education

OUTPUT 1.5	INDICATORS
All children experience a ‘smooth transition’ to primary school education	# of students in grade 1 and grade 2 benefiting from transition to primary school interventions

The Transitions Curriculum⁴³ aims to develop a child’s readiness for school. Under the education reform agenda, there are plans to develop a kindergarten curriculum for the first year of primary. Original plans to expand the transitions curriculum into additional target areas and enhancing the theoretical and practical training on transition techniques in education colleges are now being revisited given the current education reforms.

Output 1.6: Systems of quality control strengthened among ECCD providers

OUTPUT 1.6	INDICATORS
Systems of quality control strengthened among ECCD providers	# of township ECCD network groups strengthened
	% of township ECCD network groups that are functioning according to agreed standards

As a means of strengthening wider systems and increasing sustainability of ECCD provision, MEC will support the establishment of township ECCD network groups. Network groups will include private, faith-based and government managed ECCD providers, affirming MEC’s commitment to the healthy ecology of education organisations.

Network groups will support monitoring, technical support, advocacy and coordination at Township level. ECCD network group’s objectives include capacity building of existing CBOs, networking and coordination in the respective region to sustain/maintain existing services, increasing coverage of ECCD services and dissemination of ECCD knowledge in the respective and adjacent regions.

The ECCD Network groups will be established and supported in preparation for government to take the lead as their capacity strengthens. This will also align with the development of the ECCD Policy.

⁴³This curriculum has been developed and revised and forms an 8 week methodology for teachers to use in the first weeks of primary school. The underlying key principles of the TC methodology include active learning, problem solving activity, stimulating environment, enabling play and learning, importance of a welcoming environment, appropriate and comfortable furniture/teaching aids, encouraging and enabling parental involvement in learning process, teaching process which encourages holistic development

4.6.2. Component 2: Equitable access to quality complementary basic education systems significantly improved

COMPONENT 2	INDICATORS
Access to quality complementary basic education systems significantly improved	Retention rate in complementary Education system schools (disaggregated for girls, boys and children with special needs)

The strength of the MEC is its experience with engagement of education systems that fall outside of the government education sector, in particular the Monastic School System and ethnic state education structures. These systems are important because they reach marginalized children and allow teacher and administrators the flexibility to test curriculum, teaching methods and other programs, not currently possible within the boundaries of the government system.

Currently, support given to these complementary basic education systems, delivered through non-state organisations both local and international, has been limited in size and not well coordinated. These systems are at different phases of development, though it is possible to identify common challenges, which include:

- A need for minimum standards and regulatory frameworks;
- Access to teacher training and professional development;
- A need to reduce size and better equip classrooms;
- A move from traditional teacher-centred approaches to child-centred approaches;
- A need for up-to-date curriculum and teaching materials;
- A need for better school-based management;
- Establishment of sustainable funding.

MEC will improve these complementary basic education systems through capacity building and operational research. This support will be phased over a four-year period with varying degrees of involvement from the MEC founding members. Over the first two years significant resources will be committed to the Monastic System where Burnet Institute has already developed relationships and begun programming on a limited scale. Support to other complementary systems will require organisational mapping, and institutional capacity assessments will help MEC to determine the scale and scope of capacity building efforts.

Output 2.1: Management and leadership capacity of the complementary school systems strengthened

OUTPUT 2.1	INDICATORS
Management and leadership capacity of the complementary school systems strengthened	# of teacher trainers in school hubs trained
	% of teacher trainers who are capable to train teachers in child-centred approaches to education, assessment, curriculum development, and school administration
	# of school administrators and school principals trained
	% of school administrators and school principles that are applying minimum standards in school administration

This output will focus on the development of leadership and management capacity of the complementary school systems (including the Monastic System and Ethnic Education Systems). Monastic school support will link to existing work currently funded by the European Union (EU) and Pyoe Pin. During the first two years of MEC funding to Burnet priority will be working with the group of monastery school leaders elected through the EU/Pyoe Pin funded initiative to oversee the development of quality and minimum standards. This group, known as the Monastic Education Development Group, is made up of chairs or secretaries of seven states/divisions. They will receive further training and capacity building, based on needs identified in the institutional assessment. At state/division level, hubs will be developed to provide support to schools in their respective states/divisions. These hubs will be staffed by teacher trainers and administrative experts. They will be responsible for ongoing capacity building and technical assistance and the support of the roll out of minimum standards. A similar approach and set of activities could be used with other complementary systems depending on the capacity assessments, once it has been completed and needs identified.

Output 2.2: Teachers and schools deliver effective child-centred education meeting minimum standards

OUTPUT 2.2	INDICATORS
Teachers and schools deliver effective child-centred education meeting minimum standards	# of teachers of complementary education system schools trained
	% of teachers of complementary education system schools trained that are applying child-centred teaching and learning methods

This output will focus on ensuring that the complementary education systems and schools within them have the technical and administrative capacity to deliver a child-centred primary education. In years one and two, Monastic School System programming will include building the management and leadership capacity for teachers, school heads and administrator. This will include a module dedicated to Monitoring and Evaluation. A ‘hub system’ (one in each State/Division) to ensure ongoing support to teachers and school administrators will be established. Improvements in teaching will be supported by improvements in the schools’ environments, which include water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and programs.

In addition to work with Monastic Schools, MEC will seek to support similar initiatives with other complementary education systems, such as those in Mon, Kayin, and Kachin States.

Output 2.3: Schools are safe and child-friendly environments conducive to learning

OUTPUT 2.3	INDICATORS
Schools are safe, healthy and child-friendly environments conducive to learning	# of complementary education system schools in target townships that received support to make schools safe, healthy and child friendly.
	%of complementary education system schools in target townships which meet quality criteria

Ill health has a considerable impact on learning outcomes for children. Whilst the program will not address all child health issues, a minimum set of activities will be supported through MEC which will include:

- Developing school committees that are tasked with improving the school environment. This will include improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the school. Training will be provided to teachers and parents to increase their understanding of the importance of hygiene and teachers will be helped to integrate basic hygiene learning into classroom activities. Schools will be supported to develop WASH strategies which will include the installation of WASH facilities including latrines and safe water supplies;
- Previous experience of MEC founding partners has shown that increasing teachers’ and parents’ understanding of child developmental stages has affected the development of age appropriate and more child-focussed teaching strategies. This has been true both in school during formal education and at home, for example in changing disciplining behaviours. Therefore teachers training in CCA will be supplemented by training in child development and psychosocial support.
- Improving the quality of teaching will also be enhanced through the upgrading of school facilities which will include improving playground facilities and other outdoor areas. Parent committees will be actively involved in planning for this and for the maintenance of any infrastructure development.

Output 2.4: Parents and communities actively engaged in education

OUTPUT 2.4	INDICATORS
Parents and communities actively engaged in education	# of complimentary education system schools that had awareness raising about parents associations.
	% of complementary education system schools having an active parents association

Often school leadership does not actively involve parents. Parental involvement increases the likelihood that children complete their primary school years. Strategies that will be incorporated in encouraging greater parental involvement include:

- Community awareness-raising on the benefits of education. Simply alerting parents to the longer term value of education for their children is necessary in many parts of the country, particularly areas where children have not always had access to school or where there has been a reluctance to send children of non-Burmese speaking families to schools where Burmese is spoken. Staff already trained in community mobilisation within the Monastic System will be tasked with working with hubs and schools to develop strategies for awareness-raising within school communities.
- Activating/reactivating community/school forums. Despite some schools having parent-teacher associations or committees, there is no commonly accepted guideline for the role of these groups applied across monastic schools. As part of the development of a regulatory framework (discussed above) the role and function of parent-teacher associations will be agreed upon and then rolled out through the hub structure. In addition, the introduction of parent-teacher interviews to discuss children's progress, parent nights, social events etc will be considered, trialled then brought to scale.
- Piloting innovative strategies to address barriers to school attendance. Parents will be consulted about the underlying causes of school dropout and non-enrolment in a bid to develop innovations to overcome these. Strategies will include 'food for school' in collaboration with World Food Program, or small loans to parent-teacher committees. Parent involvement will also enable a more informed discussion and response to issues such as disability that affect children's inclusion in school and programs will be funded that pilot innovation to encourage inclusion.

4.6.3. Component3: Civil society engage in education sector policy debate

COMPONENT 3	INDICATORS
Civil society engage in education sector policy debate	# of policy reform areas identified and commonly agreed upon
	# of minimum standards formulated and adopted and legal frameworks changed based on inputs from civil society
	<p>Civil Society Empowerment Index: Civil society actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) represent the diversity of people in their working area including vulnerable groups b) demonstrate ability to access information, service providers and mobilize financial resources c) effectively link and network with other organisations d) report improvements in the operating environment e) report that the MEC helps to achieve their goals and has a positive impact on their work and sector

As a part of a sector-wide approach, MEC will complement the QBEP Output 3, “Enhanced planning, management, monitoring & evaluation and mentoring capacity of key education actors at all levels, “ by fostering the development of a broad-based coalition of non-state education actors. Joined up, skilled, informed and innovative, this coalition will be positioned to engage in policy debate and reform ensuring a more representative diversity of contributions. For the MEC, strengthening of civil society is both a means to an end - high quality service delivery – and, an end in itself -- a responsible and representative voice on important education matters.

Though an in-depth study has not been conducted on the extent of non-state education related activities across the country, in 2009, Pyoe Pin conducted a mapping of activities in basic education. This identified four international non-state education actors and thirteen local organisations, not including the complementary education systems. The mapping also recognized, but did not count, many localized, commonly volunteer-led groups organising education activities from early childhood through tertiary level. The Capacity Building Initiative’s NGO Directory shows an increase from 31 to 40 education-oriented local NGOs between 2004 and 2010.⁴⁴The recent MIMU’s 3W data released in May 2013⁴⁵ show that 42

⁴⁴ Included organisations generally have offices or representatives in Yangon and must be willing to be publicly listed; both criteria mean that many active groups will not choose to be listed. In terms of education, it includes national NGOs, GONGO’s and some centers for orphans and vulnerable children.

NGOs are working in education sector projects. And, MEC Founding Members have identified 12 international organisations, 15 local organisations and 5 complementary education systems in 2012. All currently conduct activities within the range of MEC's proposed basic education program components

Historically, religious and cultural discrimination, constrained resources and limited legal and operating space have led to a fragmented sector. Many local CSOs have carried out projects through sub-contractual relationships with INGOs and UN agencies. This has, to a degree, limited the development of certain organisational skills and systems to those that meet the needs of these partnerships, often de-prioritizing CSO autonomy. Several of the larger, national NGOs have proven significant capacity to handle funds, conduct sophisticated monitoring and evaluation and integrate community needs into programming. Others less experienced with international development assistance, lack management and financial systems.

Unfamiliar with fundamental values of engaged and representative civil society, many CSOs' decision-making structures reflect the steep hierarchies of contemporary Myanmar society, privileging Burmese fluency and suffused with nepotism.

In the past several years, Pyoe Pin has been working with local organisations to develop commonly-agreed upon core competencies for teacher's employing child-centred approaches in the primary classroom. Focused on Yangon-based organisations that operate in several states and divisions, this process has demonstrated the potential of coordinated, effective multi-stakeholder engagement. The MEC founding partners have also been working with UNICEF through existing coordinating mechanisms like ETWG and the DP group, to support coordination of the sector, sharing best practice and lessons learnt as well as supporting MoE on the CESR process.

In response, MEC will engage in activities that connect organisations through improved communication, build leadership, define functional partnerships, enhance organisational capacity and improve technical skills and knowledge around important education related topics.

MEC will initiate a series of activities that galvanize civil society actors with a focus on cooperation and scalable innovation. Both aspects will include critical capacity and skills development through mentoring, joint action and gatherings, decision-making over fund allocations and direct training in technical skills development. The activities are designed from the basis that stakeholder have a say in the type of capacity enhancement enacted.

Output 3.1: Enhanced cooperation of non-state actors in education

OUTPUT 3.1	INDICATORS
Enhanced cooperation of non-state actors in education	# of examples of good practice, innovations and new approaches documented and shared with ETWG and relevant government departments

⁴⁵ <http://themimu.info/3W/index.php>

Without a clear focal point, organisations small and large have limited coordination and even knowledge of one another. MEC will establish platforms to facilitate horizontal and vertical linkages that further coordinate civil society actors, systematically consulting with national, regional and international representatives of civil society. These consultations will lead to a communications plan that will include websites, social media, forums, meetings, email lists and a communications tree. In this way, MEC will become a catalyst for communications, but not the exclusive convener.

Output 3.2: Innovative and scalable education programs implemented by civil society organisations (e.g. local NGOs, CBOs, FBOs)

OUTPUT 3.2	INDICATORS
Innovative and scalable education programs implemented by civil society organisations (e.g. local NGOs, CBOs, FBOs)	# of grantees successfully implementing basic education improvement activities
	% of grant funds that go to marginalized groups

Members/Partners in the MEC will be able to take part in a comprehensive capacity development program, which will include an institutional capacity assessment, customised training and mentoring and evaluation. Areas for capacity development include education technical capacity, organisational development and advocacy. There will be an emphasis on coordination and collaboration among MEC partners/members.

Activities will be founded on evidence from a comprehensive organisational mapping of local civil society organisations across Myanmar that is involved in education activities. This study will include CBOs and national NGOs as well as complementary systems.

MEC will be a catalyst for innovative programs in basic education. With dedicated and targeted support, more CSOs, who know their communities well, will operate in the field, leading to new thinking on problems in access, retention and inclusion in education. With improved coordination, new activities that demonstrate impact can be expanded.

Sharing and exchanging will increase opportunities for innovation. And, with the right conduits in place, these can inform policy debate. MEC will organise forums and discussion to stimulate thinking and keep members informed on legal and operating context.

Central to the process of stimulating innovation in the sector, MEC will set up an innovation fund. In 2013, MEC will establish guidelines for the fund.

4.6.4. Component 4: Out-of-school children access quality alternative education programs

COMPONENT 4	INDICATORS
Out-of-school children access quality alternative education programs	# of additional children enrolled in alternative education programs (disaggregated for girls, boys and children with special needs)
	% of children fully literate after completing NFE classes

Despite an increase in the quality and geographic coverage of education services through MEC and QBEP, the reality for a significant number of children and families is that pupils will not complete primary school. MEC, with its civil society partnerships, will target out of school children with a variety of innovative, community-based programs aimed at increasing literacy and numeracy as well as developing children and young people’s life skills and work opportunities.

There are numerous local and international CSOs currently working in what has become known as ‘non-formal education’. Under this umbrella term, activities include literacy and numeracy, work skills, creative pursuits and sports. Such activities are often part of a broader development initiative, e.g. training girls in income generation activities to provide an alternative to sex work as a part of an anti-trafficking programming. These programs are, on the whole localized, responding to a discrete set of local circumstances. As a result:

- There has been little coordination amongst CSOs in the identification of underlying causes of children’s vulnerabilities including understanding reasons why they are not attending formal school;
- Worthwhile activities that have been developed (including education and training materials) have not been widely shared or taken to scale;
- There is little understanding of the collective impact of these activities.

MEC believes that non-formal education activities are better viewed as alternative education programs that have two major results: firstly, they provide a bridge for children to re-enter the formal education system, or one of the complementary systems; and, secondly, they provide opportunity for learning for those children who will never be able to return to or, have never attend a formal school. This component is, therefore, paramount in addressing the needs of some of the most vulnerable children in the country.

Output 4.1: Appropriate interventions researched and developed

OUTPUT 4.1	INDICATORS
Appropriate interventions researched and developed	# of intervention models developed for out-of-school children

The MEC will put in place a funding mechanism to conduct technical reviews of project models and approaches, and commission research for gaining better understanding of issues related to the reasons why children are not attending school or dropping out from school. MEC M&E team will work together with stakeholders to design the technical reviews, collect information, analyse the findings, and make designing and/or modification to the implementation of projects addressing out-of-school children issues. MEC also plans to work with CESR to provide technical backstopping for conducting studies and analysis for tasks identified under NFE component.

Output 4.2: Out-of-school children have opportunities to access literacy and numeracy training, life-skills development, and reengage with school-based learning

OUTPUT 4.2	INDICATORS
Out-of-school children have opportunities to access literacy and numeracy training, life skills education, and reengage with school-based learning	# of NFE centres set up
	% of NFE centres set up which meet quality criteria

Concurrently, activities that are already underway amongst the MEC founding members and have a proven efficacy may be scaled up through later grant funding. Non Formal Education will be supported as a viable tool to provide learning opportunities for children aged 8 to 18 years who cannot access the formal school system, children who drop out before gaining meaningful and lasting learning experience, children who are enrolled but not attending school regularly, and children who are academically weak.

In the first two years, 19 new NFE centres will be established by World Vision, in consultation with the communities. During this consultation, a plan and timeframe will be agreed for the handover of the management of the NFE centres to the community. Each centre will serve about 30 children per year. Classes will be held at least two times per day: morning and evening. These flexible operating hours allow children who are working to be able to attend the classes after or before work.

World Vision’s NFE curriculum promoted will cover two main topics: basic literacy (reading and maths) and life skills education. The literacy curriculum includes four levels: illiterate, semi-illiterate, functional literate and literate. Children's progress against the four levels will be regularly assessed and recorded in a class level database. The topics covered under life skills include: life goal plan, decision making/problem solving, and conflict resolution, dealing with peer pressure, anger management, discipline and HIV awareness.

NFE classes will be run by core workers, usually volunteers or paid by the community, who will be recruited from the communities and trained on the existing literacy and life skills education curriculum, child-centred learning methodologies, child protection and child rights, and the provision of psycho-social support.

There will be opportunities for the parents to gain a greater understanding of the value of education through parental education. Existing parental education IEC materials tailored for NFE classes will be printed and distributed. The parental education will be done through the peer-to-peer approach. Parents and guardians will be trained as peer educators through ToT training. Once the peer educators are trained, they will be able to give parental education sessions at various times and different locations. This will enable more parents and guardians to be reached with the important messages regarding children's development and education. These messages will impress upon parents the importance of education and to reduce the number of hours students have to work to support their families.

4.6.5. Component 5: Access to education in emergencies

COMPONENT 5	INDICATORS
Access to education in emergencies	# of timely education emergency response interventions implemented with partners in response to emergencies

A child who has an education disrupted whether by illness, emergency or other reasons, will always have difficulty catching up, and in many cases may never fully do so. The longer the disruption to a child's education, the greater he or she will be at a disadvantage.

Myanmar is vulnerable to a number of natural disasters⁴⁶ including flood, cyclone, drought, storm, landslide and earthquake, tsunami, forest fires and urban fires. And, in the decades since independence, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced as a result of ongoing armed conflict in several of the ethnic minority areas of the country. The current pursuit of ceasefire arrangement between the Myanmar military and several of the different ethnic armed opposition groups could lead to ongoing displacement or potentially, the resettlement of a significant number of people displaced over the years.

The massive devastation and loss of life caused by Cyclone Nargis has put disaster preparedness high onto the agenda in Myanmar and a range of state, UN and non-state actors are engaged in preparedness. The need for better preparation was further emphasized by the impacts of both Cyclone Giri (October 2010) and the earthquake in Shan state in March of 2011. As it stands, The Department of Relief and Resettlement coordinates preparedness and response. UNOCHA is present in country and Contingency Plans are prepared for each sector/thematic area. These are revised annually.

According to the Inter Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards rapid emergency response demands adequate capacity and preparedness, coordination and cluster management capacity, funding and access to affected areas. In the event of an emergency UNICEF and Save the Children have capacity to mobilise and manage the Education Cluster and coordinate with the appropriate Departments and partners in responding rapidly to minimize the disruption which children experience in an emergency.

Since June 2010, the Disaster Preparedness and Response in Education (DPRE) Working Group has been working at the national level, supporting activities related to DRR and Education in Emergencies interventions in Myanmar. The DPRE Working Group functions as a sub group of the ETWG and has the objective of reducing risk and vulnerability to disasters by equipping school administrators, teachers, students and the community at large to understand how they can best protect themselves, their property and their livelihoods. In particular, the DPRE Working Group works to support the Government of Myanmar in developing packages of resource materials and documented examples of good practice; mainstreaming DRR into the education sector and promoting DRR practice in schools of Myanmar and running programs of training, seminars, workshops and potentially model implementation of DRR in Education at school level

46 Hazard Profile Myanmar (Asia Disaster Prevention Centre)
<http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2009/HazardProfileoMyanmar.pdf>

Alongside work to build capacity and resilience in the formal education sector, it is critical to ensure that complementary education provision is resilient. The activities under this component will build that resilience.

In the event of an emergency, generally there are partners on the ground, well positioned to respond rapidly. However, funding streams are not immediately available. In larger scale emergencies, even CERF and other emergency funds take time to be processed with delays of several weeks. The establishment of a response fund, a rapid release system and a system for pre-positioned stocks will enable locally based partners to deploy immediately and undertake rapid assessments and initial response activities.

MEC will create mechanisms necessary for a rapid response while ensuring necessary due diligence processes are followed. The Outputs are complementary ensuring capacity and preparedness. These interventions tie into sector level activities of the Education Cluster co-leads, contingency planning both within the sector and across all sectors, coordination mechanisms of Education NGOs in preparedness and would be carried out in coordination and collaboration with the DPRE.

Output 5.1: Emergency education fund mechanism established for immediate education needs in emergencies

OUTPUT 5.1	INDICATORS
Emergency education Fund mechanism established for immediate education needs in emergencies	Proposals for Emergency Fund for Education approved by MEC Program Steering Committee within 48 hours of receiving proposal

MEC will establish a dedicated replenishable fund for release in the event of an emergency. This would be held and managed under guidelines developed by the MEC Team and approved by the Program Steering Committee/Board of Trustees. It is envisaged that by coordinating rapid response teams, funding could be released to local partners, particularly if the affected areas are those less accessible to national or international agencies. MEC and local partners could be quickly identified and necessary support could quickly reach affected children. This fund would also meet the needs of smaller scale responses such as the Magway flood response 2011, which do not attract large scale funding.

Rapid release of funds could enable partners to undertake Rapid Assessments in the very first stages of a response. The funds would cover assessment costs, partner costs and identify initial response needs. It could also enable the early distribution of pre-positioned stocks (under Output 3 below). Experience has shown that valuable response time can be lost waiting for funding to be confirmed and then requisitioning and distributing supplies.

Output 5.2: Local partners and communities are equipped and prepared to initiate an education in emergency response

OUTPUT 5.2	INDICATORS
Local partners and communities are equipped and prepared to initiate an education in emergency response	# of education partners trained on education in emergencies

MEC will ensure that all civil society partners, including through complementary education systems, in coordination with DPRE, the Education Cluster/Sector leads, Myanmar Network of NGOs Education Group and other agencies, groups and networks receive basic training on education in emergencies. In particular the INEE training framework will be used as a basis for capacity development in line with sectoral initiatives.

The capacity analysis of NGOs would include analysis of preparedness and seek to incorporate a fundamental level of training in EiE so that partners can be mobilized rapidly in the event of an emergency.

Output 5.3: Education equipment repository system set up

OUTPUT 5.3	INDICATORS
Education equipment repository system set up	Education equipment repositories set up for emergencies

Small stocks of pre-positioned education and school stocks are being maintained by some education agencies. However, larger partners may not be able to move into a specific area when an emergency strikes and could experience delays in obtaining approval and permission to operate. With pre-positioned stocks, these can be distributed to local partners who have a presence on the ground without delay. In the event of a larger scale emergency, we expect that additional funding would become available allowing for the necessary level of supplies.

A system of virtual stock maintenance would ensure that stocks can be quickly identified and then replenished and further stocks requisitioned as required for the response. The system would ensure that stocks would be distributed and replenished on a rolling basis so that there is a constant pre-positioned stock in place.

Given their experience and expertise in emergency response, and responsibility under the ETWG, Save the Children Myanmar will lead the development of Component 5 in close collaboration with the MEC team.

4.7. Cross-cutting Issues

4.7.1. Gender

The gender strategy for the Project will reflect Save the Children’s Policy as well as the principles identified in AusAID’s thematic policy. A comprehensive gender strategy will be developed by MEC founding members in consultation with AusAID and DFID during the first nine months of the project commencement.⁴⁷ Reference documents will include AusAID’s Promoting Opportunities for All -Gender equality and women’s empowerment and DFID’s Strategic Vision for Girls and Women and their Burma Operational Plan – Gender Annex. A comprehensive approach will be adopted that includes:

- A focus on community engagement in early childhood care and development, developing the skills of teachers and developing learning materials, this project will

⁴⁷ Technical support will be available from AusAID or DFID if required. AusAID and DFID will approve the gender strategy.

respond directly to significant gender related issues that exist in Myanmar, most notably in relation to access to education but also health through parenting interventions.

- Strategies to ensure inclusion and participation of women and men, girls and boys in program planning, monitoring etc;
- Mainstreaming gender equality: The incorporation of gender equality across all of our work (institutional, operational, policy and programs) is based on the assumption that equality is not a women's issue but a key development issue;
- Gender analysis: The systematic gathering and examination of information about the differences between women/men and girls/boys and the social relations shaped by gender; inclusion of gender data in MEC baseline studies.

4.7.2. Disability

As contracting agency, Save the Children will use the AusAID Development for All (2008) policy as to guide the MEC program in supporting the participation of people with disabilities and to facilitate their access to education services.

A disability strategy will be developed by MEC founding members in consultation in the first nine months of the project commencement.⁴⁸ A Disability Inclusive Strategy will be developed and will address the following key themes:

- The systematic discrimination and stigmatization of people with disabilities that occurs at individual, family, community and institutional levels. The strategy will address the challenges of translating disability policy into practice by developing an inclusive program through awareness-raising of staff and stakeholders, policy development and implementation, training and research;
- Participation and inclusion for all people with disabilities at all phases of program planning and design, implementation and evaluation. Barriers to participation will be identified and addressed in the design and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation these barriers will be developed;
- Recent disability policies recommend a 'twin track' approach to including disability within development projects. The CAID will explore including disability in all aspects of a program (or 'mainstreaming') as well as having specific resources and support to ensure that children/adults with a disability can access the support they require to be able to access the same opportunities;
- An assessment on disability will form an integral part of the baseline study and will also be the subject of research conducted in the course of the program;
- Disability will be a focus for grant applicants once the grant system is functioning.

4.7.3. Inclusiveness

The MEC program recognizes the challenges to marginalized and disadvantaged populations, including ethnically and linguistically diverse groups and disaster and conflict-affected communities in accessing education services. The program will undertake research early in the program to identify barriers and pose solutions for these populations.

⁴⁸ Technical support will be available from AusAID or DFID if required to assist in developing the disability strategy. AusAID and DFID will approve the disability strategy.

The most marginalized and disadvantaged populations in selected Townships will be identified through community led planning of opportunities for early learning experiences and preparing all children for primary school.

4.7.4. Child Protection

The Save the Children Safeguarding Policy will be the primary policy used to inform the development of specific and practical child protection procedures for the MEC program. The Safeguarding Protocol complies with the requirements of AusAID's Child Protection Policy 2013 and also adheres to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All MEC members, contracting agencies and their implementing partners have child protection policies and mechanisms that enable them to adhere to the Save the Children primary policy requirements of monitoring and reporting on child protection issues. MEC members and contracting agencies will receive periodic training in their use and compliance to facilitate understanding and policy adoption.

4.7.5. Conflict Sensitivity and Conflict Transformation

The program will adopt a 'Do no harm' approach, seeking to build 'connectors' and to minimise 'dividers', so as to avoid community tensions and conflicts. This means that education interventions implemented under the MEC must:

- Strive for open, transparent and non discriminatory beneficiary selection processes to avoid division between beneficiary groups;
- Reinforce capacities for peace for example through the provision of life skills education on conflict resolution, reduction of prejudices and increased tolerance for diversity.

An introduction to conflict-sensitive approaches and do-no-harm principles will be included in orientation programs for new staff and partners.

Beyond conflict sensitivity, the MEC will actively seek to support conflict transformation through support for targeted interventions seek to identify and address the underlying causes of conflict.

5. Management and Implementation Arrangements

5.1. Governance and Management

Governance of the program will evolve, as outlined in section 4.3:

2013:

Save the Children will be the primary recipient of funding for the first period of operation and enter formal funding agreements with donors to the MEC. The Senior MEC Team will be recruited and complemented by one existing senior level staff member from each of the three MEC founding members of the MEC. They will contribute approximately 33% of their full time work load to the design and setup of the Finance and Grants, M&E, Capacity Building and Collaboration Strategies Each of the founding agencies will, in addition, be responsible for the management of their own programs which will be contracted separately with Save the Children Australia. A Program Steering Committee will be established consisting of founding agency representatives (heads of agencies), donor representatives and an independent representative. This committee will provide overall strategic guidance to the MEC and approve the systems and strategies, prepared by the MEC Team. By the end of 2013, the design of the different Fund mechanisms will be completed, including a comprehensive outline of the roles and responsibility of all stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees.

2014:

2014 will see the recruitment of a full contingent of MEC Team staff. This should be in place by March 2014.

The Board of Trustees will take full oversight of the MEC by 2014. Day to day management of operations will be the responsibility of the MEC Team. The responsibility of the Board of Trustees will likely include the following:

- Oversee Save The Children Myanmar's management of the MEC Team;
- Support MEC fund replenishments and make funding decisions;
- Review, approve and monitor operating policies and procedures developed by the MEC Team.
- Receive analysis of national strategies and operational plans to inform decision making.
- Dialogue with the MOE, national coordination structures including the ETWG, and with other key stakeholders;
- Liaise with contract holders (e.g., SC-Australia for AusAID, SCUUK for Educate a Child)
- Receive and approve annual MEC work plans and budgets, annual reports and audit reports and tracking of action points;
- Monitor, and where appropriate, mitigate risks.
- Official communications for the MEC.

Donor representation on the Board of Trustees will be automatic for the duration of their involvement in the program. Non donor trustees will serve for a limited time period. MEC will require that a majority of trustees will satisfy international audit standards of independence. Trustees will be required to disclose to the board the material facts of any proposed matter in which the trustee has an actual or potential conflict of interest prior to

its consideration by the board. Special attention will be given to ensuring that the process of grant making will be free from actual, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. If decisions are made about grants with which a trustee is affiliated or other potential or actual conflicts of interest exist, the Trustee having the conflict will be required to excuse him or herself from consideration of the matter and, must leave the room during its consideration. Founding members of MEC may not be trustees.

While the Board of Trustees will take full oversight of the MEC, taking responsibility for fund allocation and maintenance as well as proposal review and approval, the day to day management of operations will remain the responsibility of the MEC Management Team. The Board will oversee the MEC Management Team, ensuring agreed operating policies and procedures are implemented. The Board of Trustees will also receive and approve annual MEC work plans and budgets as well as annual reports and audit reports. In addition, the Board of Trustees will monitor MEC Management Team performance and advise on risk mitigation measures. Further detail on governance structures appear in Annex I.

As the parties to the AusAID – Save the Children Australia MEC agreement, SC-Australia and AusAID will be ultimately responsible for the terms governing the MEC. SC-Australia has sub-contracted with SCI Myanmar which will be responsible for in-country implementation and management of the MEC Management Team, overseen by the Board of Trustees. Any recommendations by the Board of Trustees that impact the terms of the MEC agreement must be agreed to by SC-Australia as contract holders, subsequent to which the MEC agreement will be varied formally in writing as necessary. This arrangement will need to be revisited as other donors come on board.

5.2. Fund Operations and Management

5.2.1. Contracting of Implementing Partners

Roughly 30% of funding is assigned to early childhood development, 40% to primary education and 30% to non-formal education programs. These indicative splits are subject to change by the Program Steering Committee or Board of Trustees. During Year 1, Burnet Institute and World Vision Myanmar will enter project agreements with Save the Children. Other local implementing partners will also be contracted by Save the Children once recommended by the Program Steering Committee. From 2014, all contracting will take place between implementing agencies and the MEC Team, who will organise the grant management.

5.3. Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

5.3.1. Purpose and Objective of MEC M&E System

The M&E system for MEC will be an integrated system of reflection and communication supporting project implementation. The focus will be on learning approach to M&E that uses achievements and problems for better decision-making and accountability. The M&E System put in place for MEC will ensure that the system helps primary stakeholders,

implementing partners and project staff learn together in order to improve the MEC interventions on a continual basis.

MEC's Theory of Change links at the impact level with the UNICEF managed QBEP and will form the basis for MEC's M&E framework. This linkage of MEC to Myanmar's QBEP makes it crucial for the MEC to be "Managing for Impact" meaning that MEC needs to respond to changing circumstances and increased understanding by adapting the project so that it will more likely to achieve its intended impacts. Managing for impact is only possible if MEC has reliable information about the progress of activities and their outcomes, the reasons for success and failure, and the context in which activities are taking place. This information is the output of MEC's M&E procedures.

The overall purpose of MEC's M&E System is:

*To provide the **information** needed for **impact oriented project management** and to involve key stakeholders in **learning** how to improve project implementation **and policy dialogue**. The M&E system will provide regular reports on MEC **progress** to the different stakeholder groups in the format appropriate to their needs.*

Beyond measuring progress against targets to show progress, the **key objectives** of the M&E system for MEC will be:

- 1. Enhancing, measuring and Understanding Impact:** M&E will contribute to managing the resources and activities of MEC to enhance impacts along a continuum, from short term to long term. This would be achieved through ensuring clarity about MEC goals by all implementing partners, and monitoring to understand if lower-level outputs are contributing to higher-level goals, factoring in other external influences. It also requires conscious effort to learn to identify corrective actions that could further enhance impact.
- 2. Increasing Participation:** Participation applies not only to primary stakeholders of MEC but requires giving more space to CSOs, communities, schools, and others, as implementing partners. The role of MEC is one of facilitation between diverse partners, rather than one of steering from a central decision-making position. Each stakeholder group will be engaged from the beginning in designing the M&E Systems, and they will have a key role in contributing to the monitoring, evaluation and knowledge creation that will help measure MEC progress and impact. Care will be taken to factor in varying M&E capacities of stakeholders so as to develop M&E processes that are inclusive and will not leave out participation of stakeholders who are relatively weak in their M&E capacities. An M&E system run entirely by and for MEC will not be sufficient to meet all project needs. The M&E system of MEC is for all stakeholders.
- 3. Improving Management by Strengthening M&E:** M&E is not – and cannot be – a substitute for good project management. M&E System for MEC will: provide managers with information they need for day-to-day decisions in the ever changing contexts of Myanmar; provide MEC and its partners with information needed to guide the MEC strategy towards achieving the goal and objectives; provide early warning of problematic areas that need corrective action; help empower stakeholders by creating opportunities for them to reflect critically on the MEC's direction and help decide on improvements; build understanding and capacity amongst those involved in MEC; motivate and stimulate learning amongst those committed to making MEC a success; and assess progress and so enable accountability requirements to be met.

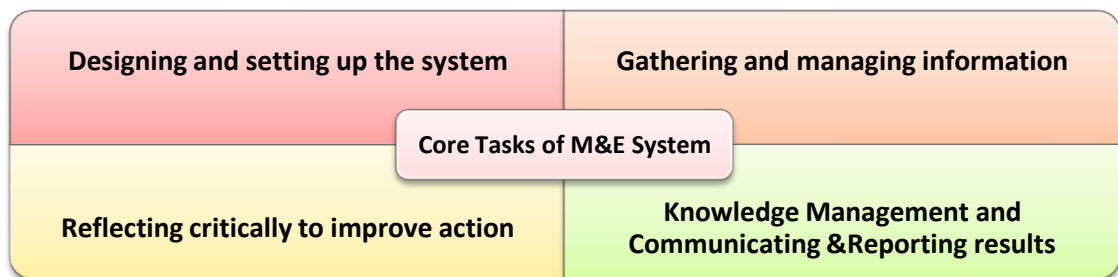
4. **Supporting Evidence Based Advocacy:** MEC advocacy efforts aims to support a wider debate and dialogue on alternative and complementary education solutions for difficult-to-reach populations and settings to gain high level political commitment to the importance of promoting access to quality education for the most disadvantaged in country. Advocacy at various levels will be informed by the body of evidence generated from monitoring MEC.

5. **Knowledge Management:** Knowledge management component of the MEC’s M&E system will help MEC and its partners to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Experience, perspectives, voices and aspirations of various stakeholders will be included in the advocacy strategies. MEC will ensure that key stakeholders’ capacities are strengthened in: a) monitoring and research, b) development of advocacy tools such as policy and advocacy briefs, and c) advocacy at national, sub-regional and regional levels based on the evidence generated through monitoring and research. The evidence gathered through monitoring and research will enable MEC to be more effective in representing the voice at global, regional, sub-regional and national partnerships, networks and alliances.

5.3.2. Core Tasks of MEC M&E System

For achieving these objectives, the M&E System of MEC will consist of four interlinked parts:

1. Setting up the M&E system by identifying information needs to guide the project strategy, ensure effective operations and meet external reporting requirements.
2. Gathering and managing information through structured approaches as well as informally. This would also include establishment of a database of civil society education partners (CSOs, CBOs, NGOs, INGOs etc) across the country to ensure a complete picture of education programming in Myanmar. This would also enable the rapid activation of a response in the event of emergency.



1. Involve project stakeholders in reflecting critically by sharing the analysis of information gathered. This would include frameworks for topical or thematic research as relevant to MEC work and ability to examine and analyse research produced by members/partners.
2. The results of M&E need to be communicated to the people who need to use it.

1. Setting up the M&E system

An indicative M&E Plan can be found in Annex F in the form of a table, setting out summary details of indicators down to output level including indicator definitions, calculations required for the analysis, data collection methodology, frequency of data collection, responsibilities for data collection and analysis. This will enable the MEC to collect

comparable data over time across all implementation partners. An Indicator Tracking Table will be developed based on the project logframe to track, document, and display where the project stands with regard to its indicators and shows progress achieved towards the indicator targets. In this way, the MEC will measure both the progress towards the project goal and outcome as well as the effectiveness of key components and outputs in the 'Theory of Change'.

The MEC M&E unit will develop this framework further in 2013 to discuss with partners their expectations and desired level of collaboration on all M&E components and encourage participation by local authorities, partners and project participants in the M&E process. Thus the M&E system will unfold its potential to empower partners and local people to control their own development, with critical self-evaluations of collective experiences, reinforcing capacity for self-management.

Aside from keeping track of performance and assessing if the project is achieving the envisaged results, monitoring risks identified in the Risk Management Matrix will be an indispensable component of the M&E framework. The Risk Management Matrix will be reviewed every 6 months to (1) review all outstanding risks to see whether they are still valid, (2) to look at what went well and how identified risks have been mitigated and (3) collate new risks that have happened since the last review.

The primary responsibility for establishing and implementing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) procedures will be with the MEC MERL Director.

2. Gathering and Managing Information

i. Baseline:

Conducting a baseline for MEC at the beginning of the project is not a technically appropriate approach due to (i) MEC's sub-grants approach to project implementation which results in partners starting projects at different times; and (ii) the MEC project implementation not being confined to a specific geographic area. The geographic areas of MEC will be determined by the target areas proposed by partners as a part of the sub-grants procedure. As the geographic target area of MEC is not defined specifically, a baseline study for MEC will have to be conducted country-wide to capture the geographical, ethnic, language, access and other variations in the MEC indicators. As MEC is not likely to cover all the Townships of Myanmar, conducting a country-wide baseline is not a worthwhile effort, does not add value, and is cost prohibitive.

MEC is proposing to setup a baseline for each sub-grant, which will be specific to the indicators of the components for which the partners will be working for. For example, if a sub-grantee from Lashio Township in Shan State is proposing to work on Component 1 and 3, the partner will be required to conduct a baseline only for indicators Component 1 and 3 of MEC logframe. The partner will conduct the baseline using forms developed by MEC's M&E Team to ensure that there is consistency and standardization of baseline information being collected by different partners from various geographic areas. MEC's M&E Team will provide the technical support as per the requirements of the partner.

ii. Monitoring

Regular monitoring of output indicators specified in the logical framework will provide information on progress towards planned results for which MEC implementation partners will be responsible and provide essential information for successful management and decision making. Monitoring will also provide information that informs evaluation and learning.

Project's major data collection efforts will be concentrated at the stakeholder level and will include multiple methods. Given the challenges in the project, MEC is aware that a simple, cost-effective and useful monitoring system is essential to achieve sustainability. The MEC and partners will use a monitoring and evaluation system that is (a) participatory, and will train and engage all key stakeholders in data collection and analysis; (b) easy to access information necessary to further the decision-making process and promote improvements; and (c) simple to apply, with field-tested methods that are easy to use and of low cost to replicate. To ensure that all the required monitoring data are collected and reported in a consistent manner, the MEC M&E Team will provide guidance on data collection and how to calculate output-level indicators, as well as monitoring templates.

Monitoring at output level will be conducted via a range of methodologies, depending upon the issue being monitored, and both quantitative and qualitative information will be gathered. The methodologies include collection of quantitative data (e.g. # and % of ECCD facilities that meet minimum quality standards), and qualitative data from interviews and Focus Group Discussions (e.g. changes in parenting practices) with project participants and partners. MEC's M&E System will include an activity tracking system, which is a monitoring approach that focuses on a number of sample beneficiaries (such as schools, ECCD Centres, girl students) for a period of time and monitors the changes to them while participating in project activities. The activity tracking system will allow MEC to monitor activities and outputs, as well as certain outcomes.

To assist the MEC and the stakeholders to organise, summarize, analyse and apply the information collected with monitoring tools, a computer-based M&E information system will be used. The M&E information system will reduce the data collection burden on project staff, will organise the M&E information electronically, and will ensure the usage and applicability of collected information. The M&E information management system will assist the project team to incorporate the monitoring data into the reporting requirements.

iii. Evaluation

The entire MEC including all the partners will be externally evaluated during the second semester of calendar year 2015 (considering the grant mechanism will start in the 1st semester of 2014) to determine whether it is delivering the desired results and assess progress made against outcomes. Particular focus will be placed on coordination issues and synergy with other interventions (e.g. QBEP). The extent to which the MEC has effectively mainstreamed cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, child protection, disability) will likewise be a central focus.

Findings of the evaluation will be reported to AusAID, DFID, MEC founding organisations and implementation partners and a summary made publicly available through the 'MEC Monitor'. Once the midterm evaluation report has been finalized and accepted, the MEC

will prepare an evaluation follow up plan which summarizes when, how and by whom the recommendations made in the evaluation report will be implemented.

The MEC will have a “rolling design”. This means in practice that the Board of Trustees will undertake a thorough annual program review, as part of the annual work plan design process. These reviews will provide an opportunity to adapt the design to a fluid political situation and address any challenges that may occur during implementation.

iv. Technical Reviews and Research

Currently there is a dearth of research in most sectors in Myanmar and education is no exception. Along with political developments, the possibility to conduct and even publish research is becoming less sensitive. However the capacity to conduct meaningful research, even at an operational level, is limited. The MEC will look towards increasing both research output and capacity. Research will be focussed on basic educational development as a whole and, in particular, research questions that help gauge the success and impact of the MEC program. An integral component of the capacity building activity of the MEC will be focussed on developing research capacity amongst partners and consortium members. Burnet, as a research institute, is well placed to support in this area. A first step will be the development of a research agenda in education. This will build upon the current CESR processes which include a number of discrete research tasks, and link with the goals and aspirations of the MEC. MEC will also put in place a funding mechanism to conduct technical reviews of project models and approaches, such as the NFE, ECD Model, Teacher’s Training Models, etc. MEC M&E team will work together with stakeholders to design the technical reviews, collect information, analyse the findings, and make modification to the implementation of the models, if necessary. All technical review processes will be documented to contribute to improving institutional memory and organisational learning. The dissemination of technical reviews will be shared during national level thematic workshops and meetings.

In addition to the technical reviews of the various interventions of the project, as part of the research agenda, MEC will conduct or support research on certain themes, assisted and guided by professional researchers, with the aim of improving strategies, practices, and knowledge of the context in which MEC operates. This will likely include: a focus on girl’s education; the impact of ethno-lingual differences on educational achievements; identifying the impact of particular teaching practices on student learning; looking at the effectiveness of specific elements of teacher training; identifying effective strategies for the integration of disabled children into mainstream education; and additional studies related to the results proposed for the project. M&E of activities will also pave the way to documenting and disseminating positive results and lessons learnt.

v. The findings from research will be shared with stakeholders through dissemination workshops and publication of research findings. It is anticipated that the research findings will assist the MEC, as well as various stakeholders to improve overall effectiveness and increase long term impact.

3. Reflecting critically to improve action

i. Providing structured learning and reflection opportunities to MEC and key stakeholders

The purposes of structured reflection and learning are:

- To assist MEC, implementing partners and key stakeholders to reflect regularly on the results of project inputs and activities;
- To build lessons learnt based on reflection, and to use these to inform future directions for the project, including technical approaches used.

These annual reflection and learning exercises will have two stages. Firstly, MEC and the implementing partners will collect data to inform the reflection, through methods such as focus group discussions, key informant interviews and semi structured interviews, PRA tools, and quantitative methods. The second stage is the annual reflection and learning workshop, during which the findings from stage 1 will be shared with a representative group of implementing partners, stakeholders, and MEC. Learning among the participants will be facilitated through a series of questions, including:

- Where do we want to go? (review project's goal and outcomes);
- How will we get there? (review models and approaches);
- What have we done so far? (reflect on completed activities and outputs);
- Where are we now? (reflect on findings of discussions);
- Are we on the right track? (analysis of approaches and project's conceptual framework); and
- What can we do differently?

As a result of these reflection and learning workshops, MEC and stakeholders will modify and update the annual plans and the implementing partners will adjust technical models and approaches, if necessary, in consultation with MEC.

Together with regular monitoring data collected by the project, the findings of these reflection and learning workshops will be used to inform bi-annual and annual reports.

ii. Program Steering Committee

The Program Steering Committee will meet to discuss the progress of the program and make strategic decisions that require inputs from all the partners. An important role of the PSC will be to help improve the adaptability and responsiveness by the project related to changing circumstances. The PSC meetings will help ensure that project management is aware of, and responds appropriately to, problems that arise, as well as opportunities that emerge due to changes in the operating environment. During the PSC meetings, equal opportunity will be provided to representatives to raise concerns for discussion and participate in collective decision making. A detailed term of reference for the Program Steering Committee will be developed.

4. Communicating M&E Results

i. Knowledge Management

The information generated by a range of strategies and practices mentioned above will form the basis for Knowledge Management component of MEC's M&E System. Knowledge

management component of MEC will ensure a participatory learning process that includes all relevant stakeholders and partners of MEC. Learning from the program will be captured in the qualitative reporting and shared upwards with local authorities and governments, CSOs, NGOs, and communities who have common interests. The timely availability of quality and relevant information for use by a variety of audiences and purposes will reinforce gains made by the program. With its specially developed M&E system and customized database, the program will be in a position to easily and systematically produce issue papers and contribute evidence to deeper and broader dialogue and policy debates.

Partners, relevant stakeholders, government and other peer organisations will participate in a range of regular review workshops, both technical (annual at minimum), issue specific (ad hoc), and routine monitoring (quarterly at minimum), during which time reports and information will be shared and discussed. As part of M&E, the PSC will review annual work plans; review M&E and data collection systems; review progress against indicators and develop corrective procedures; coordinate and harmonize program activities; and review progress towards program milestones. A further output from each of the programs' review workshops will be key messages that will be communicated to partners and other stakeholders about measured impact, progress, short comings, and what data are available to inform decision-making at policy or program levels. Some of these learning will be used to influence policy change, highlighting potential benefits from program interventions, specifically related to technical best practices that enable equitable development.

ii. Communities of Practice

MEC would encourage utilization of the knowledge generated from MEC's Knowledge Management System for formation of "community of practice" through the process of sharing information and experiences by representatives from partners and stakeholders. MEC would encourage, support, and sponsor communities of practice in order to benefit from shared knowledge that may lead to better impact. The community of practice, collectively and individually, is considered a rich potential source of helpful information in the form of actual experiences; in other words, examples of good practices. It is assumed that Communities of Practice promoted by MEC impact on four areas of MEC program:

- Decreasing the learning curve of new partners
- Responding more rapidly to requests for technical support from partners
- Reducing rework and preventing "reinvention of the wheel"
- Spawning new ideas for improving impact of MEC

iii. Reporting

The MEC Team will submit financial and program reports to the Program Steering Committee, as stipulated in the program agreement. These will be organised around the achievement of the indicators included in the logframe. Reports will document performance and progress against targets. Under-performance will result in corrective steps being identified and agreed upon with the Program Steering Committee/Board of Trustees.

Within the project, all MEC implementation partners will prepare reports to the MEC Team, outlining progress and performance issues, problems arising and proposed or completed solutions. Information from different implementation partners will be consolidated by the MEC Team. The frequency, content, format, and publication of these reports will be proposed by the MEC team and approved by the Program Steering Committee in 2013.

Reports will be compliant with AusAID / DFID reporting requirements.

For a standard calendar year, donor reporting dates will be:

6-monthly report: Period – 1 Jan-30 Jun; Implementing partners report to multi-donor trust fund by 31 July; multi-donor trust fund submits report to donors by 30 Sep.

Annual report: Period – 1 Jan-31 Dec; Implementing partners report to multi-donor trust fund by 28 Feb; multi-donor trust fund submits reports to donors by 30 Apr.

5.4 Sustainability

This program aims to achieve change which will be self sustaining at a variety of levels. In the shorter term, the granting of funds will act as a catalyst which will support longer term change, through widening reach and coverage. By the end of the first year, a sustainability strategy will be developed by MEC NGO partners in consultation with AusAID and DFID. The sustainability strategy will map out the factors that support and undermine sustainability and key sustainability goals for the program. The sustainability strategy will be approved by AusAID and DFID.

Approaches to ensure sustainability for different elements of the program will include the following:

5.4.1. Civil society partners

The key strategy of working through partners, strengthening their capacity and developing innovations will provide the basis for longer term change.

5.4.2. Efficiency and capacity gains

- Exchange of ideas/good practice
- Development of a capacity building strategy based on CSO capacity analysis
- Efficiency gains from training – longer term impact, change in practice, methods of ensure prolonged change (e.g. through mentoring and hubs)
- A key element of managing the sustainability will be the on-going monitoring as a part of the overall performance assessment framework. Too often there is a focus on a narrow set of outputs and outcomes. The framework to be developed will monitor factors behind the quantitative data and will capture costs, benefits, processes and qualitative information. As the grant program aims to encourage innovation and local approaches it is to be expected that some delivery will not deliver the results expected or can only deliver in a way that is not sustainable. It will be a key task of the Board of Trustees to make decisions based on the M&E data and the performance framework as whether to continue or suspend programs.

5.4.3. Partnership approach

- Partners taking over recurrent costs, and activities (community based ECCD provision, monastic systems)
- Increase reach of ECCD through number of local organisations and supporting communities
- The MEC Management Team have the role of supporting the local partners to bring well thought through programs to the table. A well-staffed and well qualified MEC Management Team will act to build capacity, monitor progress and make the links to the macro levels (government, other partners, UNICEF etc.). The program will strengthen existing forums for dialogue and will actively aim to build new forums for the exchange of ideas and influencing/supporting policy and strategic dimensions. While in the first instance these are likely to be with UNICEF and the key line agencies (education, health) the program will seek to build a dialog and alliances with the central agencies (finance, civil service, Office of the PM). In this way the opportunity for state funding and engagement can be continuously explored against a background of evidence based activity.

5.4.4. Grants

- Incremental access to additional grants for successful Implementing Partner projects. (Organisations that implement high quality, effective projects and demonstrate successful organisational development and growth will be prioritised for follow on funding)
- A part of the analysis of each grant application will be around how the programs are envisioned over time as being embedded within the community, family, local government. In addition, the grant application will be evaluated from an economic point of view (and monitored closely) to consider value for money, cost viability and impact on parents/community. Bringing together the rigor of pre grant analysis, local knowledge around the political economy, working with local partners, the support available from the program management team, the on-going monitoring and the knowledge management should result in sustainable programs.

5.4.5. ECCD network mechanisms

ECCD network groups, creating a system of mechanisms to ensure long term sustainability through monitoring and strengthening of quality, professional development and networking of service providers; Ownership of township level authorities to take responsibility for ECCD provision.

5.4.6. Increasing government ownership

Government take increasing responsibility for implementation, and monitoring. Government pick up capital expenditure on certain items

The program is a complex of interlinked activity that will stimulate the demand for quality education and will look for innovative ways to respond to the demand by supplying alternative education options as appropriate and within the broad legal and regulatory framework that the program will seek to inform and support. The program will actively seek to develop opportunity for engagement with the government to ensure that there are formal and informal routes allowing coordination, coherence and complementarities.

The programs in the first phase have a focus on building the knowledge and understanding of communities and parents around the importance and benefits of education and their responsibility and the opportunities, listening to the voice of children and then responding with appropriate supply side inputs. These programs build on previous work and have taken into account the lessons from these experiences. An important lesson has been to consider the local political economy prior to having a program, this approach allows for a genuine understanding of how to stimulate and develop the demand and to respond in an appropriate manner – or particular importance when trying to reach the most marginal and vulnerable groups of children. The knowledge that continues to be gained from the present programs will provide elements for the basis of supporting, evaluating and implementing the grant program.

5.5 Risks and Risk Management

Attached in Annex G

5.6 Donor Compliance, Accountability and Effectiveness

5.1. Donor Compliance

The MEC and its partners will comply with all donor policies and requirements, including but not limited to, procurement, counter terrorism, child protection, and fraud.

The MEC and its partners will ensure that disability inclusion, gender equality, peace building and sustainability are prioritised in the MEC's activities. The MEC Management Team will develop thematic strategies on each of these cross-cutting issues during the first year of MEC implementation to guide activities of MEC and its partners in relation to these issues.

5.2. Accountability

Donor compliance addresses some key aspects of accountability to donors. The design of the MEC, with donor representatives included in the oversight structure, provides a mechanism for participation and communication which goes beyond that of typical grant based development projects. External and internal audits, external programme evaluations and monitoring and evaluation systems and reporting all contribute to a strong environment of donor accountability.

Civil society participation and coordination are entrenched in the programme design as providing mechanisms to ensure accountability to other key stakeholders.

The Development Effectiveness Team from Save the Children Australia has developed a Donor Compliance, Accountability and Inclusive Development (CAID) Support Package. The CAID Support Package will assist the MEC Management Team, to oversee and ensure accountability towards beneficiaries, as well as supporting accountability mechanisms with other stakeholders.

5.3. Effectiveness

The MEC programme design document details diverse ways in which the MEC program aims for meaningful, sustained impact is detailed throughout the design document.

A Value for Money framework will be developed for the MEC to provide a means of assessing and leading management decision making on effectiveness, alongside economy, efficiency and equity.

6. Advocacy Strategy

Joint MEC advocacy efforts aim to support a wider debate and dialogue on alternative and complementary education solutions for difficult-to-reach populations and settings to gain high level political commitment to the importance of promoting access to quality education for the most disadvantaged in country.

Linkages and complementarities with the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) need to be established by MEC founding partners, AusAID and DFID. Defining how the MEC will link to wider education sector reforms and development plans will, by necessity, be an iterative process. The review will inform the development of a comprehensive education strategy in Myanmar. The founding members of the MEC are all participating in the CESR process. As a result, the MEC will be strategically positioned and able to adapt, ensuring complementarities and integration of the MEC program with government initiatives and plans as they are realised.

MEC's advocacy work will be underpinned by principles of participation and partnership. A critical task under component 4 will be to develop partners' advocacy capacities through joint activities, networking and training on different advocacy techniques and information channels (e.g. media, lobbying decision makers, community mobilization, educating the public, building coalitions with other groups).

Potential issues to be addressed by the MEC's concerted advocacy efforts include:

- Awareness raising on the educational needs of disadvantaged children, especially girls;
- Promote recognition and understanding of the value and benefits of alternative and complementary education solutions;
- Advocate for improved and more strategic collaboration and systems of quality control among non-state education actors;
- Advocate for parental and community involvement in education.

In order to achieve the above objectives and communicate key messages and achieve policy outcomes, the following will be considered in the development of the advocacy strategy:

Research and Evidence:

- Promoting research initiatives on educational constraints and needs of most vulnerable children (e.g. analysis of reasons for children being out of school, development of innovative intervention models for out-of-school children);
- Produce technical reports to widely disseminate knowledge generated by the MEC and contributes to policy and decision making processes;
- Present program monitoring and evaluation results during exchange workshops and discuss implications on education programming and policy.

Joint in-country Public Awareness Raising Campaigns:

- Organise joint campaigns on the occasion of World Reading Day, Convention on the Rights of the Child Anniversary Day, etc.;
- Collaborate on media campaigns and media promotions on education issues;
- Carry out advocacy initiatives in partnership with the Education Thematic Working Group and UNICEF.

Information Sharing and Knowledge Management:

- Facilitate information sharing and lessons learned on good practice related to complementary and alternative education systems through national-level workshops;
- Establish and maintain an education material repository including training manuals, M&E tools, IEC materials, project implementation documents.

Policy Dialogue

- Raise awareness of target communities on current education laws and policies
- Organise policy-dialogues between MEC partners and national agencies and donors

Capacity Building for People-centred Advocacy:

- Facilitate the process of identifying and analysing education-related issues that community members want to advocate on;
- Organise trainings on advocacy techniques sub-grantees can apply to communicate the issues relevant to them;
- Strengthen community-level information dissemination mechanisms, such as peer educator networks to implement awareness raising activities;
- Facilitate active participation of children, especially the most vulnerable, so that their experiences and ideas are heard by decision and policy makers.
- The primary target audience of MEC's advocacy efforts will be decision makers (e.g. village and township-level authorities, national), policy makers (e.g. national and regional) but also parents and caregivers.

7. Links with UNICEF and Other Education Initiatives

The Myanmar Education Consortium values effective coordination with other actors in the education sector.

We share our program goal with the UNICEF Multi-Donor Education Fund Phase II (MDEF II), and ensure that our activities are complementary. In practice this means we work together to avoid duplication, share learning and experiences, and make sure that there is congruence between our monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

The Myanmar Education Consortium is coordinating with the Government of Myanmar on the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). The Myanmar Education Consortium is exploring support to the non-formal education component of CESR Phase II and helping to facilitate increased civil society engagement with the CESR.

Currently building links to a diverse network of international and local civil society actors, the Myanmar Education Consortium will act as a platform for coordination among these groups and between civil society and other education stakeholders.

Myanmar Education Consortium's relationship with donors is one of close and active partnership. The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the UK

Department for International Development (DFID) are presently the Myanmar Education Consortium's key donor partners. The Myanmar Education Consortium welcomes new partnerships with the private sector, donor Governments, and multi-lateral agencies.

The Myanmar Education Consortium is represented on key sector coordination mechanisms including the Joint Education Sector Working Group, Education Thematic Working Group (ETWG) and DP group (Development Partners in Education), and is an active participant in these forums.

Coordination with other actors will occur through the various initiatives outlined in Component 3.

8. List of Annexes

Annex A: Work plan – Year One

Annex B: Logframe

Annex C: Beneficiary Projections

Annex D: List of Townships

Annex E: MEC Phases of Development Detail and MEC Management Team

Annex F: Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix

Annex G: Risk Matrix

Annex H: Partner Selection Criteria

Annex I: Firewalls

Annex J: Map of Monastic School Student Population

Annex K: Minimum Quality Standards for ECCD

Annex L: Detailed Budget

Annex M: Communication Strategy

Annex N: Unit Cost and Value for Money

Annex O: Program Implementation Structure MEC Founding Partners

Annex P: Audit Plan

Annex Q: Save the Children Capacity Statement

Annex R: Save The Children Australia – AusAID Implementation Arrangements