

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 10-30-2014		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Development, Stability and Legitimacy: Minority Education Reform in Myanmar				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) LtCol Richard J. Schmidt, USMC Paper Advisor: CAPT Hans Sholley, USN				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited. Reference: DOD Directive 5230.24					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT Education reform in Myanmar is a complex issue that affects much more than just the well-being and potential of its minority population. Current recommendations for changes to minority education practices comprise only a fraction of the overall areas for education reform. The question that follows from this is, "What priority should be given to minority education reform?" This paper examines four variables through a stability lens to demonstrate how minority education is also linked to state stability and legitimacy. However, despite this linkage, minority education reform is presently undervalued by the state. Given this greater significance, the paper recommends that a higher priority should be given to minority education reform by both the Government of the Union of Myanmar (GOUM) and other stakeholders.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Myanmar, Education, Minority, Reform					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: UNCLASSIFIED			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**Development, Stability and Legitimacy:
Minority Education Reform in Myanmar**

by

Richard J. Schmidt

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Marine Corps

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

30 October 2014

Contents

Introduction	1
Minority Landscape and Education	2
Foreign Governments and Business: External Influence	5
Delivery	7
Access	10
Content	12
GOUM's Easy Buttons: Counterarguments	13
Conclusions and Recommendations	15
Final Remarks	17
Bibliography	18

Abstract

Education reform in Myanmar is a complex issue that affects much more than just the well-being and potential of its minority population. Current recommendations for changes to minority education practices comprise only a fraction of the overall areas for education reform. The question that follows from this is, “What priority should be given to minority education reform?” This paper examines four variables through a stability lens to demonstrate how minority education is also linked to state stability and legitimacy. However, despite this linkage, minority education reform is presently undervalued by the state. Given this greater significance, the paper recommends that a higher priority should be given to minority education reform by both the Government of the Union of Myanmar (GOUM) and other stakeholders.

In a village in eastern Myanmar, a young boy begins first grade. He is being taught in his native tongue instead of Burmese or English, which almost guarantees he will not have access to higher education later in life. The international organization supporting his school means well, but its resources are limited and unpredictable, and subject to shocks of local instability. There is a three in four chance that he will not make it to high school, dropping out either to work to support the family or because education expenses are too high.¹ What he is taught in school reinforces the fact that his people have been either persecuted or ignored by the majority peoples of his country. There is talk of a foreign company establishing a mine or a factory nearby. His older brother is looking for work, and he hopes the company decides not to look for more stable areas to locate. He's been told that his uncles may be returning from Thailand, and they'll be looking for work too. The cease-fire entered into between his people and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar seems to be holding, and the president continues to talk about reforming the country. Regardless, the boy's family remains unconvinced.

Introduction

Education reform in Myanmar is a complex issue that affects much more than just the well-being and potential of its minority population. Current recommendations for changes to minority education practices comprise only a fraction of the overall areas for education reform. The question that follows from this is, “What priority should be given to minority education reform?” This paper argues that minority education reform is undervalued by the state. However, because minority education is also linked to state stability and legitimacy, the Government of the Union of Myanmar (GOUM) and other stakeholders should increase its priority against other areas of reform.

In their 2013 paper on minority education in Myanmar, South Asia specialists Marie Lall and Ashley South of the University of London set out to recommend a model for minority education by comparing the Mon and Karen cases with respect to “who provides education (delivery), the type of education provided (content), and where and how it is provided (access).”² This paper expands upon their work by first introducing a fourth variable, the influence of external actors. It then analyzes all four variables through a stability frame – vice an education frame – in order to demonstrate minority education’s linkage to state stability and legitimacy, and to deduce what level of priority should be given to minority education reform.

Why these four variables? Because it is a fragile state, GOUM is extremely vulnerable to foreign actors with the interest, willingness and resources to invest in the country. Who delivers education, their particular interests, and the means and ways by which they do so play an important role not only in the quality and effectiveness of education, but also in political outlook. This political outlook has the potential to reinforce or mollify friction between minorities and the state. Understanding access to education is similarly important because it provides a window into both the reach of the state and opportunities for social and economic mobility. Finally, content can be used as measure of potential human capital to determine the extent to which people are prepared to enter labor and professional markets, and how attractive a society is for foreign investment. Associated closely with delivery, content also provides insights into attitudes that affect state-minority relationships.

This paper begins with a short description of the minority landscape and the state of minority education, highlighting the relatively low priority given to minority-specific education reform in Myanmar. From this foundation, the paper demonstrates the greater significance of minority education reform by analyzing the four variables through a stability lens. This significance provides the basis for the conclusion that minority education reform is undervalued by the state and by foreign stakeholders. The paper next provides criticism against arguments that would otherwise give minority education reform short shrift before concluding with a review of its findings and recommendations for policy makers.

Background: Minority and Education Landscape

Myanmar is a country of 51 million people and 135 peoples comprised of seven major ethnic groups - the Burman, Shan, Karen, Arakanese, Mon, Kachin and Chin.³ Minority peoples comprise roughly one-third of Myanmar's official population, the majority of which live on the

periphery of the state. These numbers do not include over 1.2 million Rohingya residing in Rakhine State, whom the government views as Bengali migrants.⁴ These numbers also do not include the estimated 130,000 internally displaced persons living in Thai border camps which the Thai government is planning to return to Myanmar.⁵ Conflict between both groups and Yangon continues to contribute to the overall instability of the state.

Myanmar has struggled with internal conflict since its independence in 1948, struggles that were exacerbated during the junta years. Major conflict groups within the state include the Karen and Shan (bordering Thailand) and Kachin (bordering China), the Rohingya (bordering Bangladesh) and the Mon.⁶ Cease-fire agreements were signed by major warring factions between 2011 and 2012. However, as recently as 2014 the Kachin Independence Army continued to attract recruits from both from its populations of displaced persons and others who simply could not find work.⁷ The aforementioned Rohingya, the majority of whom are Muslim, have been routinely subjected to Buddhist violence. The most recent bout of attacks occurred in January of 2014 and resulted in the deaths of 48 Rohingya.⁸ Despite these cease-fire agreements, peace and stability remain extremely tenuous.

Spread throughout these areas of conflict are extensive reserves of natural resources. These resources and a potentially able labor pool make Myanmar highly attractive to foreign investors. The McKinsey Global Institute forecasts Myanmar's potential to create 10 million non-agricultural jobs and quadruple its gross domestic product under the right political conditions and with the requisite level of investment by 2030.⁹ The current country-wide unemployment rate in Myanmar hovers around 4%.¹⁰ This figure does not account for underemployment, and its accuracy is questionable given the pressure on the government to represent a favorable environment.

With respect to education, in the period between the end of British colonial rule and the 1962 coup, Myanmar boasted a highly effective system that accommodated instruction in local minority languages. However, over the subsequent five decades, this became less so as the state exerted greater control over the population; the junta specifically targeted the education system as a way limiting opposition. Ultimately the state-sponsored education system fell into ruin. As a result, minority peoples pursued alternative solutions to educate their children. Despite these efforts, today only one-quarter to one-third of minority students complete some form of secondary education.¹¹

In 2012, Myanmar began education reform as part of its larger modernization and transition to liberal democracy. The cornerstone of education reform is the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). The review is comprised of three phases – a rapid assessment phase, in-depth assessment phase (current), and a planning and recommendation phase. The CESR committee is in the process of completing phase two this year and is expected to begin its third phase in 2015. This effort will be complemented by the parallel efforts of the Education Promotion Implementation Committee, which is responsible for implementing recommendations from CESR by developing appropriate policies and a National Education Law (NEL) to serve as a framework for reform.¹²

The NEL was passed by the parliament in September of 2014, but progress remains slow and contentious. Opponents argue that the bill still gives the state too much control and does not make sufficient concessions for minority education. President Thein Sein actually proposed delaying full implementation of the law from 2019 to 2027 for reasons that are yet not clear. This recommendation was voted down by GOUM's parliament, and the bill is presently awaiting

the president's signature. Nonetheless, this indicates that education reform will be a long and uncertain process, and even more so for minority communities.

The areas for improvement noted in the Phase I "quick review" are extensive: education legislation; management and control; information communication technology; early childhood development; primary, secondary, higher, vocational education; access to education; curriculum; language policy and practices; non-formal education [non-traditional education]; and teacher education. Notably absent was information regarding labor market requirements for education, which speaks to the weakness and subsequent lack of understanding within the current system.¹³ The draft Phase II report proposes 129 reforms, three of which are directed towards minority education reform: more teachers who speak regional and local languages, partial instruction in minority languages (as well as Burmese and English), and revitalizing learning centers for non-formal education.¹⁴

While GOUM undergoes this review, its Ministry of Education is also partnering with universities in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, the United Kingdom, the United States and others, to revitalize its undergraduate education programs. Reforms at this level are directed at developing the structures of a modern university system, which include proper administration, teacher training and development, and quality assurance and accreditation. However, as will be demonstrated later in the paper, this effort presently is of little consequence to minority populations.

Foreign Governments and Business: External Influence

Regional and global actors influence the priority of education reform and the subsequent provision and application of resources in Myanmar. In the cases of the United States and the United Kingdom, whilst cooperation on education reform exists and is encouraged, the true

priority of effort for these governments remains the development of democratic, legal and human rights regimes in Myanmar.¹⁵ A review of the 2013 Congressional Research Service's recommendations for United States policy towards Myanmar shows an emphasis on human rights and legal reform. Recommendations pertaining to education are only tangentially related to these issues insofar as the population is educated in human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Support for education reform remains contingent on positive developments in these areas. For its part, the United Kingdom's education assistance program accounts for only one-tenth of its total development package for Myanmar in 2015.¹⁶ This paper does not suggest that United States and United Kingdom Governments' priorities are misplaced. Rather, the point is made here to demonstrate the lower priority of education relative to the other policy interests of these two governments. Simply put, from the West's perspective, education reform is important, but not a priority.

As far back as 2007, ASEAN began collaborating on the development of regionally recognized education and vocational training quality assurance standards. Efforts also included increasing exchanges amongst universities in the region, and a commitment to develop the poorer nations in the Association to generate a regional pool of human capital concurrent with economic integration in the region.¹⁷ However, like the U.S. and U.K., ASEAN remains focused on larger, general reforms that are not specific to on minority education.

Foreign business investors recognize the potential that awaits in Myanmar and are poised to be another significant driver as GOUM modernizes its business and human rights regimes, and as foreign governments relax sanctions. As Eric Rose and Nina Dun of *Inside Counsel* point out, Myanmar boasts high literacy rates and low labor compensation rates, but will also require investment to develop a pool of highly skilled workers.¹⁸ Foreign investment gives the

appearance of being a quick route to education reform. However, while commercial investors may be interested in contributing to niche education or training associated with their particular industry, there is no guarantee or evidence to suggest that this commitment will extend to the general education of the larger population. Even if allowed by GOUM to invest in minority areas, a lack of consideration for and contributions to a larger education effort by foreign investors risks exacerbating tensions between minority regions and the central state.¹⁹

Delivery

Who delivers education and the structure in which they do so can have a significant impact on the character of state-minority relationships and the ability of a population to contribute to the development of a nation.²⁰ Equally important if not more so, education regimes can be used to isolate populations which ultimately affects the stability and legitimacy of the state. In Myanmar, the state and its minority populations have used education for both of these purposes, the latter of which directly reinforces cleavages between the two.

Education in Myanmar's outlying regions is delivered by several sources, and the education landscape is complicated by a variety of arrangements among these actors. The fact that multiple actors provide education by itself is not concerning. However, understanding these relationships will be a critical factor in crafting education reform that contributes both to the development of a sustainable source of human capital and to more stable relationships between the state and its minority groups.

In some cases, formal cooperation between the central government and local communities exists. In other cases, the state and local communities are in direct competition. For strategic purposes, in some instances there is tacit cooperation among the central

government, local community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As will be explained, this tacit cooperation is actually a recipe for political instability.

Four major groups deliver education in Myanmar's minority areas: the state; religious groups (Buddhist monastery and Christian church-based schools); community-based organizations (CBOs), the latter of which are often supported by NGOs; and private education companies.²¹ Buddhist monastic schools were established for the purpose of three educational outcomes: religious education only, religious education and literacy, and preparation for matriculation. The latter two models contribute directly to human capital development suitable for labor and professional markets, and all three reinforce a sense of national identity in the Buddhist-majority nation. Christian church-based schools were established for similar purposes but have on occasion fallen under greater scrutiny by the state and have been forced to use the national – and somewhat wanting – curriculum. While the state has relied on both of these religious schools to deliver what it cannot, they have also remained a target for state oppression and have been shut down from time-to-time as a part of larger efforts to stymie political unrest.

Education companies are mentioned here briefly because they are mostly accessible only to ethnic majority and affluent students in urban areas.²² Private schools are prohibited by GOUM, but a market for complementary instruction emerged under the junta to prepare students for higher education – often outside of Myanmar. The result was the proliferation of schools that teach separate courses not provided by the state, or that compensate for the poor quality state instruction. Nonetheless, this further highlights weakness of the current system.

Schools run by CBOs form the majority of education programs in minority areas. Lall and South offer contrasting examples of minority competition and cooperation with the state that center on CBOs. The Karen experience is an example of education that prepares its students for

a life “outside of Myanmar” and reinforces separation from the state.²³ The Karen took advantage of their relative isolation from Yangon, proximity to Thailand and access to NGO support to create an education haven, especially in the refugee camps along the Myanmar-Thailand border. These schools were created in response to education programs administered by the Karen National Union, the Karen political party that operated loosely within the Myanmar system and subsequently was beholden to the national curriculum. Refugee camps and other CBO schools received NGO sponsorship and as a result, the quality of education actually improved while state-delivered education continued to languish. As a result, the Karen are better prepared for local or regional work, but do not have the necessary background to sit for exams to compete for entry into Myanmar’s higher education system.²⁴ This lack of opportunity and mobility strains the Karen’s relationship with the state and contributes directly to a less stable environment.

In contrast, despite decades of conflict the Mon people have remained more aligned with the politics of the state. They were subjected to the state’s poor education regime, but also were given greater latitude to supplement the state’s curriculum with instruction in their own language. This accommodation satisfied cultural concerns while ensuring students had access to higher levels of state education. It is worth noting that while Lall and South recommend this model in principle, they also recognize that its utility is based on the willingness or recalcitrance of minority groups to make accommodations for the state.²⁵ Regardless, their analysis indirectly demonstrates the tradeoffs between quality education and stability.

In several areas, Yangon has entered into tacit, mutually supporting agreements with NGOs to provide education in minority areas through CBOs which on the surface appear to promote stability (NGOs are prohibited from delivering education directly).²⁶ NGOs are

officially required to register with the central government for oversight purposes, which in turn requires the government to attempt to enforce its laws in areas it either cannot reach or in areas where to do so would be costly, destabilizing and counterproductive.²⁷ As a result, NGOs often do not register but are still allowed to operate with very little or no attention drawn to them when providing these services. While this contributes to local stability and reduces the burden on the state, it also obscures and actually compounds the weakness of the state. Local stability is, in fact, a veneer that covers deep rooted, destabilizing grievances and masks the state's inability to provide services.

Education programs that account for ethnic or religious variance, or that are delivered by multiple sources, are not uncommon around the globe. However, as has been demonstrated, Myanmar's challenges are greater than simply developing a common curriculum or a common structure within which multiple education providers can operate. Rather, Yangon must determine how it can capitalize on or even assume the role of providing the support delivered by CBOs and NGOs to harness the potential human capital of its minorities and strengthen its own position as a legitimate government. The infrastructure and legitimacy associated with CBOs have tremendous potential to improve education and contribute to overall stability if accommodation can be reached with the state.²⁸

Access

The level of access a population has to education can determine the level to which that population is not only educated, but also to which it is integrated (or marginalized) into a larger society. Myanmar strives for universal and compulsory education; however, as with any weak state, it falls well short of the mark.²⁹ As was mentioned in the vignette, roughly half of school-aged minority children are enrolled in primary education, but only three quarters of those

children advance to secondary education. Socioeconomic status, language barriers, and in some cases limited infrastructure and resources, prohibit minority participation in education which further contributes to a disaffected population.

In minority areas, especially rural minority areas, socioeconomic status limits participation in Myanmar's education regime.³⁰ While state-sponsored education is free, ancillary fees for textbooks and other materials often discourage participation in poorer communities. Equally important is the need to work to support the family, which also prevents children from participating in education. In minority areas that are mostly poor and rural, net enrollment rates are only 46.5% of the estimated eligible population.³¹ The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (Education) reports that up to a quarter of students who begin first grade drop out before reaching the fifth grade.³²

The language of instruction limits both access to education and also its effectiveness. The state mandates that instruction be given in Burmese. This practice is not the norm in minority areas, but the value of native-tongue instruction is clearly recognized by the CESR committee.³³ On the one hand, instruction in a native-tongue with appropriate contextual references raises general literacy rates, reinforces a sense of ethnic identity and allows the student to function within their local society. On the other hand, students educated only in their native language are unable to access Myanmar's higher education system, which breeds discontent based on limited opportunity both for development and social mobility. The net result is a closed, self-reinforcing loop that contributes to instability by perpetuating the status quo relationship between minorities and the state.

A simple lack of facilities also contributes to limited access to education in minority areas. These communities have a rich tradition of trying to provide education for their children,

especially when state resources are scarce or non-existent. Despite these efforts, on average there is one primary school for every twenty-five villages in rural areas.³⁴ This limited access to education is one of many compounding factors that drive minorities to cross the border to seek new alternatives abroad and contributes to regional tension.

Content

The content of both state and minority education regimes has been problematic in two areas. First, in practical terms, content has not been congruent with requirements for labor and professional workforce markets.³⁵ Second, in political terms, competing historical identity narratives have reinforced cleavages between the state and minority groups.

A portion of the practical incongruence can be attributed to the academic materials available to schools. Approved materials provided by the state are in poor condition and printed in Burmese, which is not spoken in most minority areas, and contain references that are not useful to minority peoples within their own cultural context.³⁶ This disconnect can also be attributed to the overall weakness of the state curriculum, which has driven many minorities groups to seek out NGO supported schools.

A further challenge – both for minority and majority groups – is the fact that the technical and vocational education training (TVET) system does not produce accredited certifications.³⁷ It also does not necessarily prepare its graduates for work outside of a local area. This limited usefulness is not hard to understand. The CESR Phase II review reported that no information was available from the labor sector identifying necessary skill requirements. That is to say, there is no formal linkage between industry and TVET that drives education requirements and standards. GOUM's goal is to understand its own TVET requirements and develop training

standards congruent with the ASEAN Economic Community's Mutual Recognition Agreement by 2015.

With respect to identity, in their 2012 paper in the *Journal of Burma Studies*, Nicolas Salem-Gervais and Rosalie Metro trace the use of history in curricula for both the state and its minorities as a social engineering tool. In the case of the state, the Thai and British were portrayed as the common enemies of Myanmar, and the three Kings of Burma as benevolent drivers of unification – unification that was a natural matter of course.³⁸ Minorities are mentioned briefly in texts but only in a way that supports the narratives of a unified Burma comprised of peoples in harmony with the idea of one Myanmar ethnicity. Conversely but not surprisingly, themes in Karen and Shan history textbooks portrayed the Burmese as their natural enemy and reinforced their separate identities as distinct peoples.³⁹ Much like the influence of language on perspective, the impractical content and divisive ethnic narratives also contribute a self-reinforcing loop that fosters instability between the state and its minorities and limits potential for development.

GOUM's Easy Buttons: Counterarguments

CESR's Phase II report makes clear recommendations to transform minority education; however, these recommendations are made free of consideration for resource constraints or other potentially limiting political factors. Considering the extensiveness of the overall project, it would be easy for minority education reform to get lost in the volume of other recommended reforms.

For example, opponents could argue that minority education, while important, is not central to Myanmar's modernization efforts. Institutional theorists would suggest that institution building – whether it be constitutional, legal, economic, or in this case educational – should take

priority well ahead of any major bottom-up or locally-specific education initiatives if reforms are to be durable.⁴⁰ However, as B. Guy Peters, a professor of comparative politics at the University of Pittsburgh, demonstrates, current institutional theory is not sufficiently dynamic to account for the number of variables and general fluidity of politics to achieve the level of understanding necessary to inform policy. He offers that more useful answers lie in understanding the relationships between environment and political life.⁴¹ In this particular case, in addition to the weaknesses of the state, other variables must be considered: the relationships between the state and minorities, the state and other regional and international states, minorities and regional states, and the role of NGOs and foreign investors.

Another perspective is that because several minority groups are nearly isolated from the central government by geography, culture or conflict, focusing reform on the Burman majority in major cities and the central plains would provide a quicker return on investment in the short term. In their work on the effect of education on development, Garcia, Gunawan and Jreij of Texas A&M University demonstrate that rapid development is a function of strong primary and secondary education programs. This observation lends itself to the argument of concentrating reform at this level for the Burmese majority population (~66%).⁴² However, the foreign interest and development necessary to modernize requires a stable Myanmar, not only its central plains and major cities, which bolsters the argument to make minority education reform a high priority. An inside-out or majority-first approach to state education reform may actually delay foreign investment while investors wait for Myanmar's periphery to stabilize.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Education reform remains a complex issue. Understanding the interests and relationships among the various stakeholders, along with the critical aspects of minority education – external influences, delivery, access and content – leads to the following conclusions. First, education is not just an arena to develop social capital; rather, it is a contributor to the stability and legitimacy of the state. In light of this relationship, minority education appears to be of genuine interest to, but undervalued by, GOUM and overpowered by larger concerns for democratic and human rights reform by the international community.

Second, CESR is correct in its recommendation to develop more teachers capable of teaching in native languages, along with creating content that is both minority-relevant and useful for matriculation to higher education or technical/vocational training. However, this will only be effective over the long-term if it is underpinned by larger structural reforms to the state education regime. These reforms include the development of modern teaching materials, the elimination or subsidization of secondary school fees and the development of more infrastructure in minority areas.

Third, foreign investment can be a rapid and powerful source of capital and resources to jump start education reform in minority areas. However, it is not yet clear whether this investment would support sustained, general education programs or focus solely on the requirements of a specific industry.

Fourth, throughout its history Myanmar's peoples have placed a great importance on education and have found both the ways and the operating space to deliver some sort of education in the face of even the most oppressive circumstances.⁴³ This spirit and infrastructure

exist today and provide the state with an opportunity to leap forward with minority education reform, provided the state can reach accommodation with minority groups.

Based on these findings, because of the strong linkage of education to stability, first and foremost GOUM should place a higher priority on minority education reform. Several options are available for GOUM to construct an education regime that develops human capital and contributes to the overall legitimacy and stability of the state.

Both GOUM and its minorities should minimize politicizing education reform. While positive steps have been taken, complete subordination of the military to civilian authority is still in progress. This transition, along with the professionalization of Myanmar's armed forces, should minimize the use of education as a population control mechanism and provide the political space necessary to undertake reforms at a more rapid pace.

GOUM and its foreign government supporters should not wait for progress in other structural reform areas to begin developing a new minority education regime. Education reform takes time, and there is no reason that local initiatives and larger structural reforms cannot be developed in parallel.

While Myanmar holds much promise for foreign investors and those investors may be willing to train their own employees, the state has a role in ensuring this investment is committed to a larger and sustainable education effort. Playing a direct role in determining the conditions of investment by specifically linking investment to a comprehensive education system will also help prevent the reinforcement of minority islands that further distance minorities from the state.

The international community's continued commitment to education provides great opportunities for education reform across all areas of concern. GOUM should expand collaboration with foreign education partners and seek their expertise in the development and

delivery of comprehensive education to both majority and minority populations, which is a key component of any reputable education system.

Final Remarks

Minority education is by no means a panacea for Myanmar's challenges as it transition to liberal democracy. Simultaneous efforts across multiple and interdependent areas – education, government, economy, human rights, etc., – are necessary to create a stable environment for development. The deep-seated grievances associated with years of ethnic conflict cannot be overstated as a critical obstacle to progress. Regardless, there is intrinsic value in education that prepares a people for greater opportunity, prosperity and unity. In Myanmar's case, the priority given to minority education reform holds the potential not only to mature its human capital, but also to serve as a confidence building measure that contributes directly to state-minority reconciliation and to the overall legitimacy and stability of the state.

Bibliography

- Amenta, Edwin and Kelly M. Ramsey. *The Handbook of Politics: State and Civil Society in Global Perspective* (Springer, 2010), chap 2, accessed 15 September 2014, http://www.springer.com/cda_downloadocument.97803876892.
- British Broadcasting Corporation. "Burma census bans people registering as Rohingya," 30 March 2014. Accessed 24 September 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26807239>.
- _____. "Why is there communal violence in Myanmar?" 3 July 2014. Accessed 21 September 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18395788>.
- Chor, Heang, et al. "Myanmar's moment: Unique opportunities, major challenges." *McKinsey Global Institute*, June 2013. Accessed 18 Sept 2014. http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/asia-pacific/myanmars_moment.
- Dunn, Nina and Eric Rose. "Inside: Investing in Myanmar and diving into a new labor pool." *Inside Counsel Magazine*, 17 February 2014. Accessed 27 September 2014, <http://www.insidecounsel.com/2014/02/17/inside-investing-in-myanmar-and-diving-into-a-new>.
- Dapice, David P. "Appraising the Post-Sanctions Prospects for Myanmar's Economy: Choosing the Right Path." Harvard, 2012. Accessed 27 September 2014. <http://www.ash.harvard.edu/extension/ash/docs/appraising.pdf>.
- Garcia, Julia, Devita Gunawan and Vennessa Jreij. "The Influence of Education on Economic Development." Research paper, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 2013. Accessed 15 September 2014. <http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/148898/GARCIA-THESIS-2013.pdf?sequence=1>.
- Gooch, Liz. "Asean Nations Put Education Front and Center." *New York Times*, 30 October 2011. Accessed 27 September 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/31/world/asia/31iht-EDUCLEDE31.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.
- Guardian, "UN urges Burma to investigate Rohingya deaths after latest violence," 24 January 2014. Accessed 25 September 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/24/un-burma-investgate-rohingya-deaths-violence>.
- Martin Hayden and Richard Martin. "Recovery of the Education System in Myanmar." *Journal of International Comparative Education*, 2013, Vol 1:2. Accessed 15 September 2014. http://e-journal.um.edu.my/filebank/published_article/5028/1Hayden&Martin.pdf.
- IRIN – Service of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "Briefing: Myanmar's ethnic problems," 29 March 2012. Accessed 25 September 2014. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95195/briefing-myanmar-s-ethnic-problems>.

- Kyi, Khin Maung. "A Vision and a Strategy: Economic Development of Burma." National University of Singapore, Singapore, 2000. Accessed 20 September 2014. <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs3/Vision-strategy.ocr.pdf>.
- Lall, Marie and Ashley South. "Comparing Models of Non-state Ethnic Education in Myanmar: The Mon and Karen National Education Regimes." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 44, no. 2, (2014). Accessed 15 September 2014. <http://www.tandfonline.com.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/00472336.2013.823534>
- Lall, Marie. "Evolving Education in Myanmar: the Interplay of State, Business and the Community" in "Dictatorship, Disorder and Decline in Myanmar," eds: Monique Skidmore and Wilson, Trevor. (The Australian National University: ePress, 2008). Accessed 12 September 2014. http://press.anu.edu.au/myanmar02/mobile_devices/ch08s04.html.
- Lorch, Jasmin. "Myanmar's Civil Society – a Patch for the National Education System? The Emergence of Civil Society in Areas of State Weakness." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 3, 2007. Accessed 12 September 2014. http://www.giga-hamburg.de/sites/default/files/openaccess/suedostasienaktuell/2007_3/giga_soa_2007_.
- Martin, Michael F. "U.S. Policy Towards Burma: Issues for the 113th Congress," Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2013. Accessed 12 September 2014. <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43035.pdf>
- Metro, Rosalie and Nicolas Salem-Gervais, "A Textbook Case of Nation-Building: The Evolution of History Curricula in Myanmar" *Journal of Burma Studies* 16, no. 1, 2012.
- Michaels, Samantha. "In Burma, a Debate over Mother-Tongue Teaching." *The Irrawaddy*, 23 October 2013. Accessed 25 September 2014. <http://www.irrawaddy.org/feature/burma-debate-mother-tongue-teaching.html>.
- Myanmar Comprehensive Education Sector Review Organization, "Myanmar Comprehensive Sector Review (Overview). Accessed 25 September 2014, <http://www.cesrmm.org/index.php/en/>.
- _____. "Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase (2) Report (Draft): 20 May 2014. Accessed 25 September 2014. <http://www.cesr.org/index.php/en/documents/category/28-phase2report?download=54:presentation>.
- Peters, B. Guy. "Institutional Theory: Problems and Prospects." *Institute for Advanced Studies*, 2000. Accessed 16 September 2014. https://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/pol/pw_69.pdf.
- Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Immigration and Population. "Republic of the Union of Myanmar: The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, Summary of the Provisional Results, 2014." Accessed 19 September 2014. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/>

demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/Myanmar/MMR-2014-08-28-provres.pdf.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education. "Draft Preliminary Social Assessment: Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools Program." March 2014. Accessed 3 October 2014. http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/EAP/Myanmar/Preliminary_Social_Assessment-Draft-March_2014_consultation_English.pdf.

Robinson, Gwen. "Myanmar: foreign investment rush raises hopes...and concerns," *Financial Times Blog*, 17 June 2013. Accessed 27 September 2014. <http://www.blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2013/06/17/myanmar-foreign-investment-galore/>.

Ritter, Mario and Rob Corbia, "Thailand to Return Myanmar Refugees." *Voice of America*, 17 July 2014. Accessed 2 October 2014. <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/content/thailand-myanmar-refugees-return/1957307.html>.

Saha, Soubhik Ronnie. "Working Through Ambiguity: International NGOs in Myanmar." The Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard University, September 2011. Accessed 1 October 2014. http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezpsite/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/centers/hauser/publications/reports/myanmar_report_final_version_2011_09_08.pdf.

State Law and Order Restoration Council, "Law no 93/3 'Child Law'." Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Accessed 3 October 2014, <http://displacementsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/ THE-CHILD-LAW-1993.pdf>.

Steim, Tyler. "Burma: The War Goes On." *World Policy Journal*, 31, no. 3, (Spring 2014).

Thawngmung, Ardeth Maung. "Beyond Armed Resistance: Ethnonational Politics in Burma (Myanmar)." Honolulu: East West Center, 2011, 3. Accessed 15 September 2014. <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/ps062.pdf>.

Trading Economics, "Myanmar Economic Indicators," 11 October 2014. As reported by the Central Statistics Organization, Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Accessed 11 October 2014. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/myanmar/unemployment-rate>.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "2013/2104 Teaching and Learning Statistical Tables," Accessed October 2014. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/statistics/statistical-tables/>.

United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)/DGIF Burma. Accessed 27 September 2014. <http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/countries/MM/>.

_____. "Education Programme: Burma." Accessed 27 September 2014. http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/3719331.docx.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. “2013/2104 Teaching and Learning Statistical Tables.” Accessed 10 October 2014. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/statistics/statistical-tables/>.

¹ United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, “2013/2104 Teaching and Learning Statistical Tables,” accessed 10 October 2014, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/statistics/statistical-tables/>. The challenges to bringing Myanmar’s education system into the 21st century are not trivial. UNESCO reported that in 2011, 50% of primary school aged children were enrolled in school – of those, only 77% matriculate to secondary education. While the data provided speak to the entire country, it is reasonable to assume that rates for minorities is far less that what is recorded based on their more limited access to education. For more information on literacy rates, see: David P. Dapice et al, “Appraising the Post-Sanctions Prospects for Myanmar’s Economy: Choosing the Right Path” (Harvard: 2012), 20-26, accessed 27 September 2014, www.ash.harvard.edu/extension/ash/docs/appraising.pdf. Myanmar traditionally reports high literacy rates, upwards of 95%. However, as the authors point out, this is not necessarily functional literacy. They call into question the utility of current literacy measures. In the case of the Myanmar, with a literacy rate of 92% (CIA World Factbook), one would assume a high level of functionality within society, which is not the case – especially in rural/minority areas. Dapice, et al, suggest the ability to “read and write” is highly subjective and not an indicator of how prepared a population is to participate in the workforce.

² Marie Lall & Ashley South, “Comparing Models of Non-state Ethnic Education in Myanmar: The Mon and Karen National Education Regimes,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 44, no. 2, (2014): 298-321, accessed 15 September 2014, <http://www.tandfonline.com.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/00472336.2013.823534>.

³ Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Immigration and Population, “Republic of the Union of Myanmar: The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, Summary of the Provisional Results, 2014,” accessed 19 September 2014, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/Myanmar/MMR-2014-08-28-provres.pdf.

⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Burma census bans people registering as Rohingya,” 30 March 2014, accessed 24 September 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26807239>.

⁵ Mario Ritter and Rob Corbia, “Thailand to Return Myanmar Refugees,” 17 July 2014, accessed 2 October 2014, <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/content/thailand-myanmar-refugees-return/1957307.html>,

⁶ IRIN – Service of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Briefing: Myanmar’s ethnic problems,” 29 March 2012, accessed 25 September 2014, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95195/briefing-myanmar-s-ethnic-problems>.

⁷ Tyler Steim, “Burma: The War Goes On,” *World Policy Journal*, 31, no. 3, (Spring 2014): 54-56.

⁸ The Guardian, “UN urges Burma to investigate Rohingya deaths after latest violence,” 24 January 2014, accessed 25 September 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/24/un-burma-investgate-rohingya-deaths-violence>.

⁹ Heang Chhor, et al. (McKinsey Global Institute), “Myanmar’s moment: Unique opportunities, major challenges,” June 2013, accessed 18 Sept 2014, http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/asia-pacific/myanmars_moment.

¹⁰ Trading Economics, “Myanmar Economic Indicators,” 11 October 2014, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/myanmar/unemployment-rate>, as reported by the Central Statistics Organization, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

¹¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “2013/2104 Teaching and Learning Statistical Tables,” accessed 10 October 2014, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/statistics/statistical-tables/>.

¹² Myanmar Comprehensive Education Sector Review Organization, “Myanmar Comprehensive Sector Review (Overview), accessed 25 September 2014, <http://www.cesrmm.org/index.php/en/>.

¹³ Myanmar Comprehensive Sector Review, “Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase (2) Report (Draft): 20 May 2014, accessed 25 September 2014, <http://www.cesr.org/index.php/en/documents/category/28-phase2report?download=54:presentation>.

¹⁴ Non-Formal Education is synonymous with “non-traditional education” in the United States, meaning education for students who are generally older than students associated with particular, or who are taking classes part-time outside of their regular work environment.

¹⁵ Michael F. Martin, “U.S. Policy Towards Burma: Issues for the 113th Congress,” Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2013), 23-26, accessed 12 September 2014, <http://fas.org/spp/crs/row/R43035.pdf>.

¹⁶ United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID)/DGIF Burma, accessed 27 September 2014, <http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/countries/MM/>.

¹⁷ Liz Gooch, “Asean Nations Put Education Front and Center,” 30 October 2011, accessed 27 September 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/31/world/asia/31iht-EDUCLEDE31.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

¹⁸ Nina Dunn and Eric Rose, “Inside: Investing in Myanmar and diving into a new labor pool,” *Inside Counsel Magazine*, 17 February 2014, accessed 27 September 2014, <http://www.insidecounsel.com/2014/02/17/inside-investing-in-myanmar-and-diving-into-a-new>.

¹⁹ Several examples exist where central governments exert loose control over sub-regions, which contribute to instability due to enduring challenges to state hegemony. In the case of Bolivia, significant investment and development in its eastern departments nearly led to a legitimate bid for secession in the early 2000s. Although clearly more developed than Myanmar, the same can be said for Spain; Madrid is constantly challenged by Catalanian independence movements. There is already evidence of some rapid foreign investment based on the recent easing of sanctions. Rapid investment not linked directly to long-term development in education and other areas may be a missed opportunity if not properly managed by the state. For more information, see Gwen Robinson, “Myanmar: foreign investment rush raises hopes...and concerns,” *Financial Times Blog*, 17 June 2013, accessed 27 September 2014, <http://www.blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2013/06/17/myanmar-foreign-investment-galore/>.

²⁰ Analysis of levels and types of education in Myanmar – lower/upper primary, secondary, higher and technical vocational education training (TVET) – are central to education reform but beyond the scope of this paper.

²¹ Jasmin Lorch, “Myanmar’s Civil Society – a Patch for the National Education System? The Emergence of Civil Society in Areas of State Weakness,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 3 (2007), 65-66, accessed 12 September 2-14, http://www.giga-hamburg.de/sites/default/files/openaccess/suedostasienaktuell/2007_3/giga_soa_2007_3_lorch.pdf. In addition to the categories of education, Lorch provides an excellent discussion of the shortcoming of general state education.

²² Marie Lall, “Evolving Education in Myanmar: the Interplay of State, Business and the Community” in “Dictatorship, Disorder and Decline in Myanmar,” eds: Monique Skidmore and Trevor Wilson (The Australian National University: ePress, 2008), accessed 12 September 2014, http://press.anu.edu.au/myanmar02/mobile_devices/ch08s04.html.

²³ Lall and South, 299.

²⁴ Lorch, 162.

²⁵ Lall and South, 318.

²⁶ Lorch, 69. This is true for government controlled areas. That said, attempting to do so in uncontrolled areas would jeopardize larger NGO mission.

²⁷ Soubhik Ronnie Saha, “Working Through Ambiguity: International NGOs in Myanmar,” (The Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations Harvard University: September 2011), 5, accessed 1 October 2014, http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezpsite/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/centers/hauser/publications/reports/myanmar_report_final_version_2011_09_08.pdf.

²⁸ President Thien Sien has called for more educators capable of teaching in minority languages. This is a promising start, but it is too soon to tell if this will bear fruit. Given the other challenges associated with minority education, “mother-tongue” education must be incorporated into a larger education regime to gain traction and produce students capable of contributing to long-term societal and economic development.

²⁹ The State Law and Order Restoration Council, “Law no 93/3 ‘Child Law’,” accessed 3 October 2014, <http://displacementolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-CHILD-LAW-1993.pdf>.

-
- ³⁰ Martin Hayden and Richard Martin, "Recovery of the Education System in Myanmar," *Journal of International Comparative Education*, 2013, Vol 1:2, accessed 15 September 2014, http://e-journal.um.edu.my/filebank/published_article/5028/1Hayden&Martin.pdf, 51.
- ³¹ Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education, "Draft Preliminary Social Assessment: Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools Program," March 2014, accessed 3 October 2014, http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/EAP/Myanmar/Preliminary_Social_Assessment-Draft-March_2014_consultation_English.pdf.
- ³² United Kingdom Department for International Development, "Education Programme: Burma," accessed 27 September 2014, http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/3719331.docx.
- ³³ Samantha Michaels, "In Burma, a Debate over Mother-Tongue Teaching," *The Irrawaddy*, 23 October 2013, accessed 25 September 2014, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/feature/burma-debate-mother-tongue-teaching.html>.
- ³⁴ Khin Maung Kyi, "A Vision and a Strategy: Economic Development of Burma," (Singapore: National University of Singapore: 2000), accessed 20 September 2014, <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs3/Vision-strategy.ocr.pdf>, 145.
- ³⁵ CESR Phase II Quick Review, 58.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.
- ³⁷ Hayden and Martin, 49.
- ³⁸ Rosalie Metro and Nicolas Salem-Gervais, "A Textbook Case of Nation-Building: The Evolution of History Curricula in Myanmar," *Journal of Burma Studies* 16, no. 1 (2012), 47-52.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.
- ⁴⁰ Edwin Amenta and Kelly M. Ramsey, *The Handbook of Politics: State and Civil Society in Global Perspective* (Springer, 2010), accessed 15 September 2014, www.springer.com/cda_downloadaddocument.97803876892. In this chapter, Amenta and Ramsey provide a detailed review of the merits and limits on institution theory.
- ⁴¹ B. Guy Peters, *Institutional Theory: Problems and Prospects* (Institute for Advanced Studies: 2000), accessed 16 September 2014, https://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/pol/pw_69.pdf.
- ⁴² Julia Garcia, Devita Gunawan and Vennessa Jreij, *The Influence of Education on Economic Development* (College Station, Research Paper, TX: Texas A&M University, 2013, 21. Research paper, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 2013, accessed 15 September 2014, <http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/148898/GARCIA-THESIS-2013.pdf?sequence=1>.
- ⁴³ This holds true for not just minorities, but for Myanmar's entire population.