



ANNUAL REPORT

MYANMAR EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

1 June 2018 to 31 May 2019

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Myanmar Education Consortium



INTRODUCTION

The Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC) was established in early 2013 to support the provision of education services for marginalised, under-served children. Currently in its second phase, the Annual Report provides an overview of MEC's second year of this phase, painting a picture of the work of MEC through and with complementary education providers over the period 1 June 2018 to 30 May 2019 and achievements across the academic year.

Against a highly-fluid socio-political environment MEC reached over 350,000 learners and strengthened the provision of education with three ethnic complementary education providers and one monastic education provider. Through its theory of change, key partners aligned with selected ethnic and monastic education systems were provided with financial and technical resourcing support to engage in annual education planning across seven transformation domains ('Change Areas').

Utilising the Change Area model, and in response to the key priorities set forth in annual plans, the four ethnic and monastic education providers were supported to take tailored action toward the strengthening of systems with a focus on the education and management of teachers, the strengthening of curriculum and school and community leadership, along with human, financial and resources management, monitoring and evaluation and policy engagement and advocacy.

Through these efforts, and despite substantial challenges, the Annual Report demonstrates the progress towards its key objectives on strengthening the delivery of ethnic and monastic services and promoting inclusivity in the policy environment.

The Myanmar Education Consortium is supported by the Governments of Denmark, Australia and the United Kingdom.



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MANAGEMENT

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AOP	Annual Operational Plan
BBCD	Broad-Based Capacity Development
BE	Basic Education
CMT	Country Management Team
BHEEP	Bop Htaw Education Empowerment Programme
CPD(F)	Continuous Professional Development (Framework)
CREd	Centre for Rural Education and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEO/TEO	District Education Officer / Township Education Officer
EBEP	Ethnic Basic Education Provider
EESR	Ethnic Education State and Regions
EGRA/EGMA	Early Grades Mathematics / Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ID	Institutional Development
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Governmental Organisation
KBECCF	Kachin Basic Education Common Curriculum Framework
KECD	Karen Education and Culture Development
KEF	Kachin Education Foundation
KESS	Karen Education Systems Strengthening
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO – ED/KED	Kachin Independence Organisation – Education Department
KnEDN	Karenni Education and Development Network
KNU	Karen National Union
KNGY	Kayan New Generation Youth
KSEAG	Karen State Education Assistance Group
KTTC	Karen Teachers Training College
KTWG	Karen Teachers Working Group
MEDG	Monastic Education Development Group
MEPP	Myanmar Education Partnership Project
MESG	Monastic Education Sustainability Group/ Baka Master Planning Group
MNEC	Mon National Education Committee
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoRAC	Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture
MTB-MLE	Mother Tongue Based - Multi-Lingual Education
NCA	Nationwide Ceasefire Accord
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMSP	New Mon State Party
OD	Organisational Development
PMEL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PMT	Project Management Team
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SC	Steering Committee
SFF	Strategic Facilitation Fund
SIL	Formerly Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIP	School Improvement Planning
SMC	School Management Committee
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSWG	Sub-Sector Working Group
STEM	Strengthening Teacher Education in Myanmar
SVT	Summer Vacation Training
TC(S)F	Teacher Competency (Standards) Framework
TECPD	Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
ToT	Training/Trainers of Trainers

1 WHO WE ARE

The Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC) was established in early 2013 to support the provision of education services for marginalised, under-served children. With an updated strategy developed for 2017-2020, the MEC adopted a 'systems-strengthening' approach, to provide support for the development of ethnic and monastic complementary education systems. The program works with established education providers to place a focus on developing the quality and inclusivity of education in Myanmar for improved retention, completion and learning outcomes; and with a broader range of diverse stakeholders to address key policy barriers to effective education for the achievement of an equitable education system.

GOAL:

Through complementary education systems, provide the hardest-to-reach children with good quality, accredited education, and contribute to a coherent, inclusive national system.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

OBJECTIVE - 1

To strengthen selected complementary education service providers to deliver quality education services that enable students to achieve improved, accredited learning outcomes.

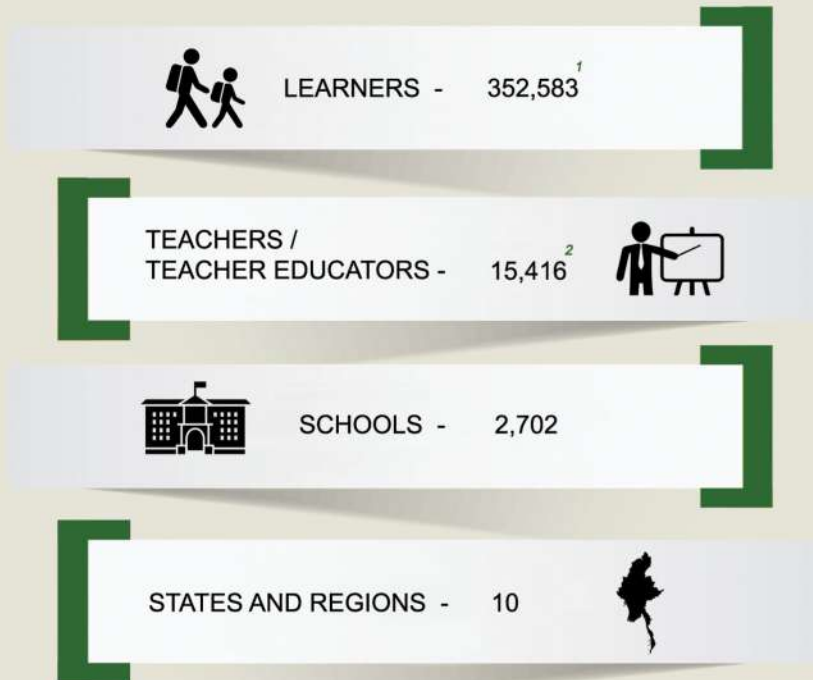
OBJECTIVE - 2

To support the transition to a more enabling policy environment that brings together a broad base of education stakeholders to promote a diverse and inclusive national education system.



2 WITH AND FOR WHOM IN 2018-19

In the Year 2 (Y2) implementation period of June 2018 – May 2019, working through and with partners MEC reached:



To achieve progress across complementary education in the operating period, MEC continued to build upon its Year 1 partnerships for the strengthening of the monastic education and ethnic education system. Key systems strengthening partners are;

The Karen Education Systems Strengthening (KESS)

The KESS project is comprised of Karen Teachers Working Group (KTWG) (as the main recipient) and the Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD) (as a sub-recipient). Formed in 1998, the Karen Teachers Working Group provides pre- and in-service professional development support to teachers in Karen areas (including Kayin State; Mon State; Bago Division (East) and Tannitharyi Division) through its Mobile Teacher Training (MTT) model, Summer Vacation Trainings (SVTs) and

the Karen Teacher Training Colleges (KTTC). Formed in 1947, the Karen Education Department administers the Karen education system under the Karen National Union structures at district, township and village tract level in both KNU-administered areas and in areas of mixed-government and KNU-administration. Working in collaboration, the KTWG and KED provide teaching and learning materials and teacher stipends to community and mixed schools. In Year 2, with MEC support, the KESS provided education services to 162,461 students and 10,615 teachers across 1,474 schools.

The Kachin Education Consortium (KEC)

The KEC is comprised of Nyein Foundation (as the main recipient), the Education Department of KIO (KIO-ED); the Kachin Education Foundation (KEF); the Northern Shan State Kachin Baptist Union Church Based Education (SJK-CBE) and the Metta Development Foundation (as sub-recipients). KEC aims to promote collaboration among Kachin ethnic education service providers in Kachin and Northern Shan states to enhance mother tongue-based quality education and a locally contextualised education policy system and curriculum development. In Year 2, with MEC support, the KEC provided education services to 19,584 students and 1,736 teachers across 183 schools.

The Mon National Education Committee (MNEC)

Founded in 1992, the MNEC administers the Mon National Education Department's network of Mon National Schools under the New Mon State Party (NMSP), providing education in Mon mother tongue across Mon state, southern Kayin state and Thanintharyi Division. In Year 2, with MEC support, the MNEC provided education services to 25,738 students (10,226 in MNEC schools, 15,512 in Mixed schools) and 808 teachers (683 in MNEC schools, 125 in Mixed schools) across 133 schools.

¹ 169,297M/183,286F

² 3,425M/11,991F

The Monastic Education Development Group (MEDG)

The MEDG was founded in 2014 as a local NGO engaged in comprehensive country-wide efforts to strengthen the monastic school system by building its capacity to provide quality education and increase access to schools for children and young people around the country, particularly in remote and isolated areas. MEDG became fully registered as a local NGO in January 2018. In Year 2, with MEC support, the MEDG provided education services to 64,849 students and 2,360 teachers across 257 schools.

In Year 2, MEC formed an additional four new partnerships with:

The Centre for Rural Education and Development (CRED)

Centre for Rural Education & Development was established in 2012 and registered as a local NGO in 2016. Through a Mobile Teacher Training model, where teachers receive continuous in-service professional development, CRED provides support for teachers in 313 schools across Shan state. Simultaneously, community education sensitization events and an annual summer school support an emphasis on the mother tongue. CRED is actively involved in advocating for MTB-MLE and plays a strong role as facilitator and convener of strategic dialogue among stakeholders engaged in Shan ethnic education.

The Karenni Education and Development Network (KnEDN)

Established in 2012 in Kayah State, KnEDN provides support across 63 schools, 5,000 students and 300 teachers across Kayah communities. Through its work, KnEDN provides support for quality basic education, vocational and non-formal, special education and post-secondary opportunities. Key activities led by KnEDN include curriculum development, community and parent engagement in education and the implementation of mechanisms for continuous professional development of teachers, with a focus on management and leadership skills.

The Kayan New Generation Youth (KNGY)

Kayan New Generation Youth, established in 2002, with a focus on education, literacy and culture and human rights, promotes increased access to education services for Kayan-speaking communities in Kayah, Shan, Kayin, Naypitaw and Mandalay Division. By training and supporting volunteer teachers in Kayan community and MoE schools through a volunteer and mobile training model, KNGY has been supporting the delivery of MTB education for Kayan children since 2007. Through its work in 2018-2019, KNGY supported 6,155 children to access education in their mother tongue.

Language and Social Development Organization (LSDO)

LSDO is a local Yangon-based NGO, focused on supporting ethnic communities to develop their language and culture, and to promote education opportunities. In partnership with minority language communities, LSDO supports development by drawing upon the linguistic and cultural resources they already have to ensure communities thrive. LSDO's work focuses on key areas such as language surveying, literacy efforts, ethno-arts research and documentation, technical linguistic support, and other linguistic, educational and development activities.



3 OPERATING CONTEXT

As anticipated at the outset of the year, the operating context continued to evolve rapidly, with a range of emerging issues and contextual trends presenting both opportunities and challenges for the implementation of MEC's 2018-2019 Annual Operating Plan.

Over-arching Context In Brief

Nation-wide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA): With formal declarations in place to enable co-ordination for service provision between the Myanmar Government and EAO NCA-signatories during the period of political dialogue, opportunities for engagement on education for ethnic children have increased. Such engagement presents the potential to further address barriers at central government level, that have to date been unresolved through state level dialogue.

By- Elections: Campaigning in by-elections for vacant parliamentary seats signalled a growing momentum ahead of the 2020 elections. Ethnic nationality efforts at party formation and mobilisation increased, with three ethnic Mon political parties, for example merging to form a single party ahead of the 2020 elections. Across the operating period, discourse on the elections increasingly referenced a need for progress in the peace talks, and to support dialogue around education.

Political Dialogue: Despite the NCA creating new space for dialogue, progress in political dialogue between the government and NCA-signatories has been limited, impacting both on partner interactions with government at state level, and on the stability of the operating environment. During the High-Level Peace Talks in Nay Pyi Taw in October 2018, the KNU announced a temporary suspension from engagement in the peace talks, citing weakening confidence in the process. The action, and signals of broader weakening confidence, impacted momentum for direct policy engagement and coordination between ethnic education providers and the MoE/respective government stakeholders at state level, further highlighting the significance of MEC interventions in support of continuing dialogue through broadened channels.

Security: Through the operating period, two of the four partners reported the impacts of conflict on the provision of education services. In Kachin and Northern Shan states, uncertainty around interim and extended ceasefires, open conflict, return and displacement, and fears for security characterised the implementation environment and impacted on the provision of services.

Education Context in Brief

NESP 2016-2021: Reforms in education continued in pursuit of the MoE's commitment to ensuring improvements in quality, inclusion and equity, with a continuing focus on teacher education, quality assurance and management with the validation exercises of the Teacher Competency Standards Framework and progress toward the development of a CPD framework.

Local Curriculum Development: In line with reforms, MoE-led development of local curriculum provides an opportunity to support learning achievements for ethnic children. Ensuring the alignment of efforts to support ethnic children with political dialogue and the development of established pathways for thematic dialogue between ethnic providers and the MoE continues to be highlighted as a priority.

Investments in Education: Myanmar became the 66th country to join the Global Partnership for Education with a US\$74 million funding commitment proposed. The commitments present significant opportunities for the successful implementation of the NESP, and additionally supports the promotion of MoE engagement with non-state education providers. In addition, new funding commitments from the European Union has directed investment into complementary education, which reflects growing recognition of the role of non-state providers in education service delivery and provides for new opportunities for collaboration.



Quarter 1: Grade 1 students listen carefully at the Naing Hlon Mon national school.

4 KEY INITIATIVES



Reflection, Learning and Planning (RLP) Series

A series of RLP workshops were held with each systems' strengthening partner, supporting MEC and partners to interrogate strategies across Change Areas, to identify successes & lessons learned, and to plan in response to emerging opportunities and challenges.

Broad-Based Capacity Development for MTB-MLE

Following the completion of a comprehensive research and design component, a broad-based capacity development initiative for mother-tongue based multi-lingual education (MTB-MLE) was initiated through new partnerships with five mother-tongue providers around Myanmar with the aim of providing assistance in the development of stronger MTB-MLE programming.

Creating Space for Dialogue

The Myanmar Education Partnerships Project (MEPP) was initiated in partnership with the World Bank, which included the subsequent completion of a comprehensive study on pathways for state and non-state dialogue and collaboration.

Operationalizing MEL Strategy

A MEC-wide Results Framework was drawn up to improve accountability vis-à-vis investments in complementary education, to support the direction of both MEC and its partners, to contribute to an international body of knowledge and to support the development of new modalities for measurement in an inclusive education system.

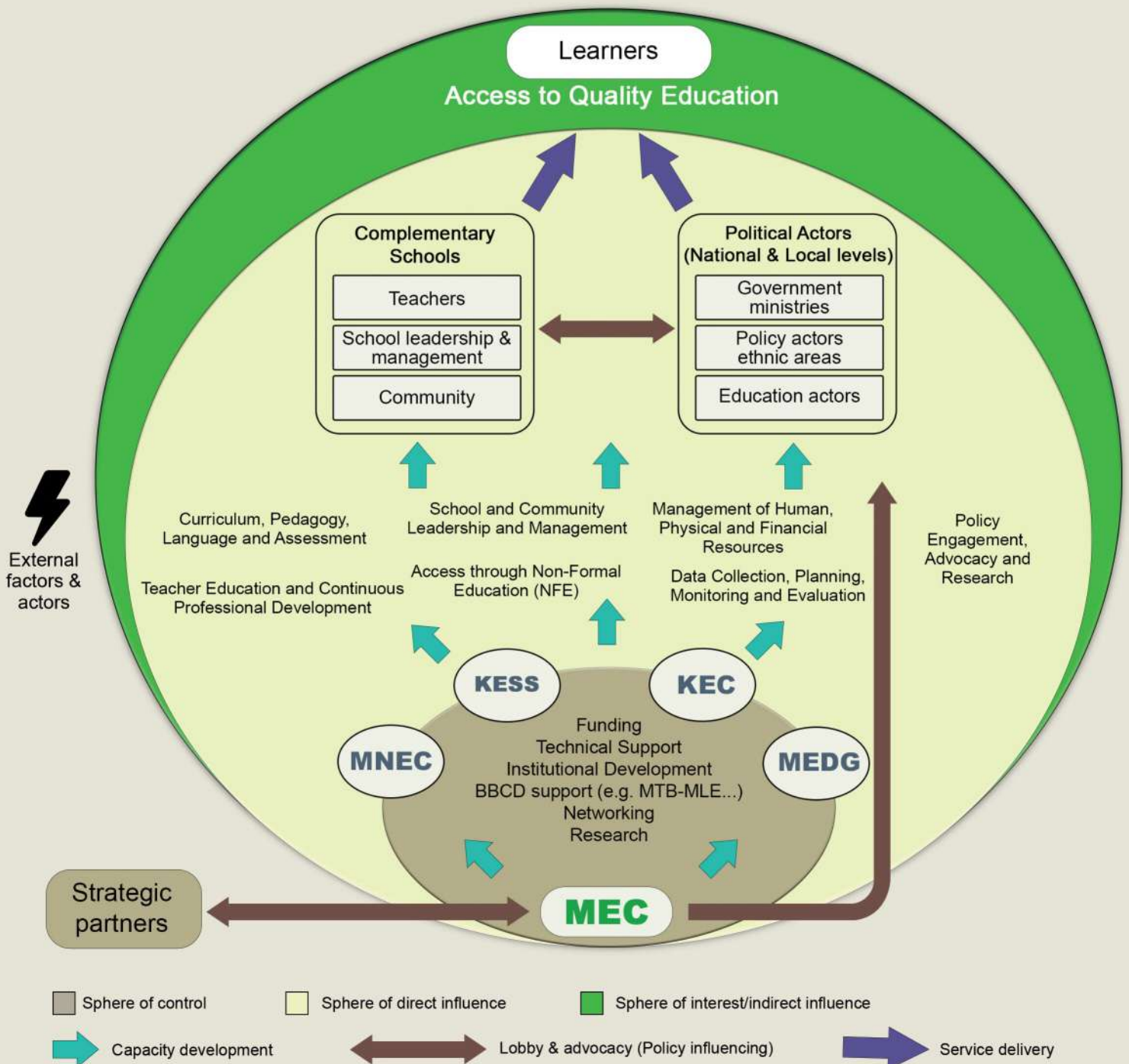
Ethnic Education States and Regions Forum

An Ethnic Education States and Regions (EESR) Forum was formed in collaboration with ADRA Myanmar to serve as a quarterly event to bring together stakeholders in complementary education for co-ordination and enhanced collaboration.

5 THEORY OF CHANGE AND APPROACH

Utilising a 'spheres of influence' model, MEC's theory of change is designed in an actor focused manner to map the program's actors according to how they influence each other; sphere of control, sphere of influence and sphere of interest.

The sphere of control contains the MEC team who maintain a high level of control over the budget and the type of activities that it implements in support of its partners (e.g. research, broad based capacity development, networking, funding) or towards influencing policy actors. The four key partners (KEC, KESS, MNEC and MEDG) are partly positioned in the sphere of control as they have a central role in the way the program's resources are utilized to sustain and strengthen their education systems (e.g. payment of teachers' salaries, funding of curriculum review processes and in-service training of teachers). At the same time, partners remain accountable for implementing MEC-supported activities according to agreed operational plans.



The sphere of influence contains the local actors who play a key role in providing quality education in complementary schools and in providing a conducive policy environment for complementary education. The MEC program team, through its support activities and through the resourcing of partners' activities, seeks to contribute to the strengthening of education systems. Here, the MEC program seeks to contribute towards a sustained positive change in the way the partners institutionalize and implement certain approaches or ways of working across seven key Change Areas. Any indications of incremental or sustained change of practice at the level of the partners within the various change areas therefore represents a first important result level for the MEC program. The partners in turn provide support to teachers and schools. It is assumed that the strengthened capacity of the partners will contribute towards improved support to the schools. It is expected that this will contribute towards improved practice of teachers, school leadership and communities with a view of providing quality education. At the same time, it is assumed that the strengthened capacity of the partners to engage in policy influencing will contribute towards more effective and evidence-based lobby and advocacy activities. Therefore, any changes at the level of the schools and the policy actors represent a second result level to which MEC contributes indirectly through its partners.

The sphere of interest contains the pupils who represent the final beneficiaries of the MEC program. Ultimately, through strengthening the partners' education systems and through supporting schools and promoting a conducive policy environment the program seeks to contribute to increased access to quality of education for pupils from under-served areas. Change at this level, such as improved learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, constitutes a third result level.

In line with the Theory of Change model, in 2018-2019, the key partners aligned with selected ethnic and monastic education systems were provided with financial and technical resourcing support across seven inter-connected domains or 'Change Areas':

- Change Area 1: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Language, Assessment
- Change Area 2: Teacher Education, Continuous Professional Development
- Change Area 3: School & Community Leadership and Management
- Change Area 4: Access through Non-Formal Education (NFE)
- Change Area 5: Human, Financial and Resources Management
- Change Area 6: Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)
- Change Area 7: Policy Engagement and Advocacy



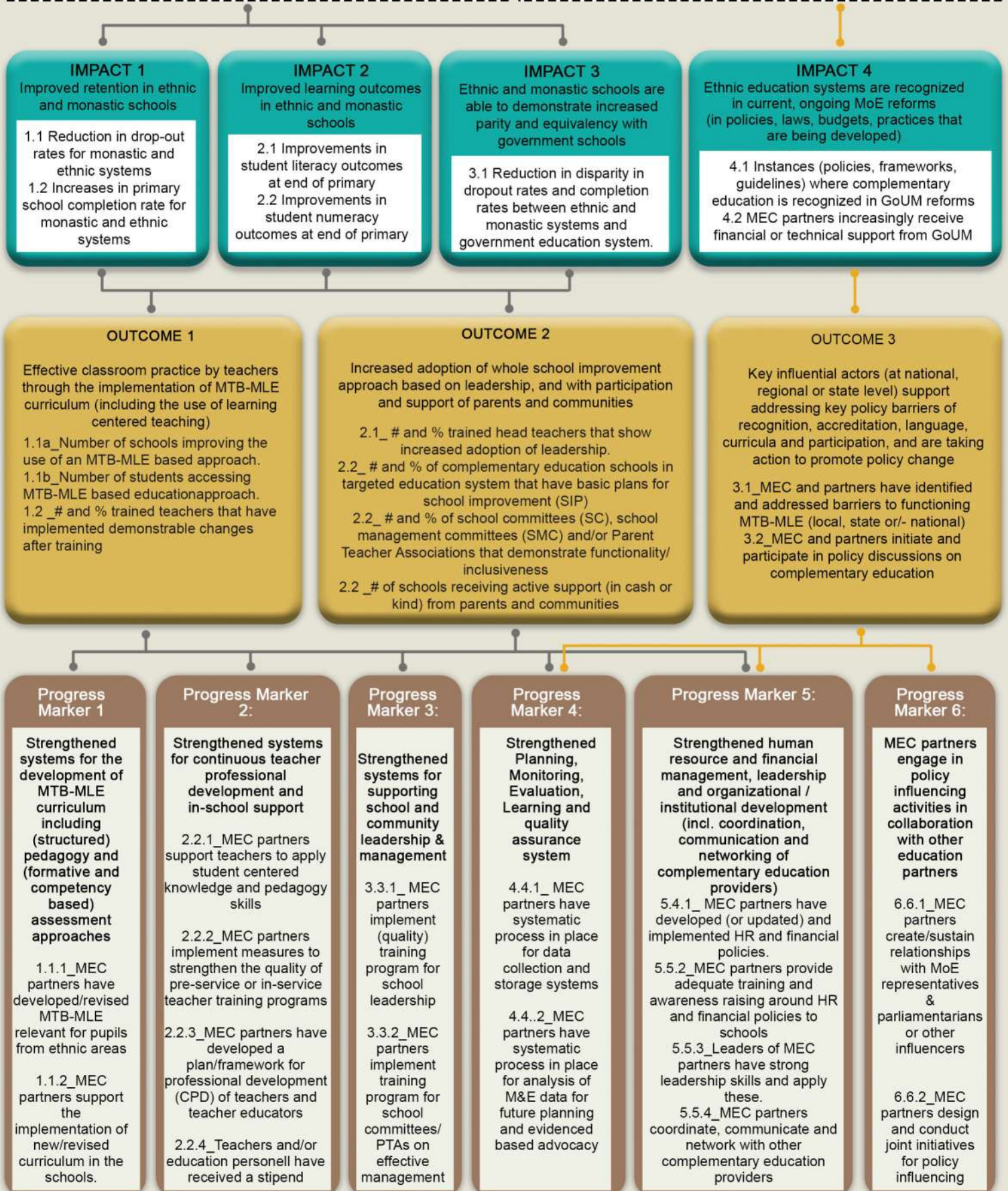
Quarter 2: CRED team conducted testing for teaching with busy picture at Sin Kham Village primary school in December 2019

6 RESULTS FRAMEWORK

A comprehensive Results Framework, finalized in the operating period, enables MEC to address the systems strengthening objectives across the complex complementary education landscape in a uniform, measurable manner, with a structure that promotes dialogue between the complementary education systems and the national education reform's transformational shifts.

Objective 1: To strengthen selected complementary education service providers to deliver quality education services that enable students to achieve improved, accredited learning outcomes

Objective 2: To support the transition to a more enabling policy environment that brings together a broad base of education stakeholders to promote a diverse and inclusive national education system



Progress Marker 1:
Strengthened systems for the development of MTB-MLE curriculum including (structured) pedagogy and (formative and competency based) assessment approaches
1.1.1_ MEC partners have developed/revised MTB-MLE relevant for pupils from ethnic areas
1.1.2_ MEC partners support the implementation of new/revised curriculum in the schools.

Progress Marker 2:
Strengthened systems for continuous teacher professional development and in-school support
2.2.1_ MEC partners support teachers to apply student centered knowledge and pedagogy skills
2.2.2_ MEC partners implement measures to strengthen the quality of pre-service or in-service teacher training programs
2.2.3_ MEC partners have developed a plan/framework for professional development (CPD) of teachers and teacher educators
2.2.4_ Teachers and/or education personell have received a stipend

Progress Marker 3:
Strengthened systems for supporting school and community leadership & management
3.3.1_ MEC partners implement (quality) training program for school leadership
3.3.2_ MEC partners implement training program for school committees/ PTAs on effective management

Progress Marker 4:
Strengthened Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and quality assurance system
4.4.1_ MEC partners have systematic process in place for data collection and storage systems
4.4.2_ MEC partners have systematic process in place for analysis of M&E data for future planning and evidenced based advocacy

Progress Marker 5:
Strengthened human resource and financial management, leadership and organizational / institutional development (incl. coordination, communication and networking of complementary education providers)
5.4.1_ MEC partners have developed (or updated) and implemented HR and financial policies.
5.5.2_ MEC partners provide adequate training and awareness raising around HR and financial policies to schools
5.5.3_ Leaders of MEC partners have strong leadership skills and apply these.
5.5.4_ MEC partners coordinate, communicate and network with other complementary education providers

Progress Marker 6:
MEC partners engage in policy influencing activities in collaboration with other education partners
6.6.1_ MEC partners create/sustain relationships with MoE representatives & parliamentarians or other influencers
6.6.2_ MEC partners design and conduct joint initiatives for policy influencing



Change Area 1: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Language and Assessment

Outcome 1.1a Number of schools improving the use of an MTB-MLE based approach.

Outcome 1.1b Number of students accessing MTB-MLE based education approach.

Progress Marker 1.1.1 MEC partners have developed/revised MTB-MLE relevant for pupils from ethnic areas

Progress Marker 1.1.2 MEC partners support the implementation of new/revised curriculum in the schools

Across Change Area 1, the program exceeded planned outcome-level targets associated with Curriculum, Pedagogy, Language and Assessment, with more learners and schools supported than targeted. Substantial progress was made in the area of MTB-MLE curriculum development/revision and implementation with significant activity around the initiation of a Broad-Based Capacity Development initiative and structured foundations for the further strengthening of MTB-MLE approaches.

Broad Based Capacity Development for MTB-MLE

Building on MEC's 2017 Thematic Strategy for Multilingual Education, MEC placed an enhanced emphasis on developing multi-lingual education practise, capacity and policy in Myanmar through the initiation of a Broad-Based Capacity Development (BBCD) program for MTB-MLE. Aligned with key indicators on the MEC Results Framework, the BBCD work seeks to support the course of dialogue, planning and decision-making on national language-in-education policy and practice in Myanmar. Efforts in Year 2 resulted in a refined design to support mother-tongue for 77,276 children across Kayan, Kayah, Shan, Kayin and Mon communities.

The design and partnerships developed through Year 2 ensure that MEC's financial and technical resourcing will make a significant and sustainable difference to the quality of education for ethnic children, supporting organisations to better understand and implement strong MTB-MLE programmes, improve the quality of teaching-learning and promote student acquisition of good literacy skills. In Year 2, selected representatives embarked on the program through attendance at the first workshop- a 15-day writers' workshop, designed to prepare participants to develop early-grade readers for Kindergarten and Grade 1 in their own ethnic language. Through the workshop, participants developed their understandings of what good L1 literature is, how to write L1 stories with the correct use of their orthography and spelling rules and learned how to recruit and teach others in the community to write L1 stories.³ At the end of the workshop, a total of 150 mother-tongue based storybooks had been created by the participants, and 5 workplans developed for the year ahead.

Further examples of progress in Change Area 1 include:

In Karen areas, the KECD commenced a community-driven curriculum strengthening process, developed an MTB-MLE awareness-raising package for field leaders and communities, and delivered a new MTB-MLE teacher training package. Through the establishment of a partnership with Colombia University, the KEC continued to explore best practice for MTB-MLE strengthening in a complex ethno-linguistic context, and developed a comprehensive plan for the strengthening of language-in-education approaches in Kachin and Northern Shan States. In Mon State, the MNEC upgraded its G2 curriculum for the provision for quality education for children in Mon national schools, and having explored alignment with the MoE G2 curriculum in order to complement on-going efforts around dialogue on student recognition.

³

Within an MTB-MLE program, mother-tongue language is referred to as L1, with L2 referring to the national language of instruction, in this case Myanmar language. Initially, participants create materials in L1 that are utilised in the classroom to support children's learning through the mother tongue. L2 materials are then introduced later to further develop understanding and learning.

Change Area 2: Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development

Outcome 1.2 # and % trained teachers that have implemented demonstrable changes after training

Progress Marker 2.2.1 MEC partners support teachers to apply student centered knowledge and pedagogy skills
Progress Marker 2.2.2 MEC partners implement measures to strengthen the quality of pre-service or in-service teacher training programs.

Progress Marker 2.2.3 MEC partners have developed a plan/framework for professional development (CPD) of teachers and teacher educators

Within the operating period, in the area of Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development, MEC exceeded planned targets, with 87% of teachers demonstrating changes following training. 369 student teachers, and 14,159 in-service teachers were trained with MEC support across complementary education in Shan, Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Thaninthiri, Sagaing, Ayerawaddy, Mandalay Division, Bago East and Bago West. In monastic education, MEDG delivered school-based teacher training for 965 teachers from 278 schools in nine states/divisions; plus and additional 389 teachers in a 15-day refresher training. School-based mentoring reached 504 teachers across 182 schools, and through mentoring and coaching, 76% of trained monastic teachers met standards criteria.

Through the emphasis on Change Area 2, MEC support ensures curriculum strengthening is rendered more effective with a complementary emphasis on teacher/teacher educator education and management, and strategies and actions that result in measurable changes in key aspects of classroom practice. In the implementation period, significant progress was demonstrated in the further development of modalities for teacher support and application of skills post-training, where MEC partners availed of relevant local and international expertise in teacher education and management. KESS and the KEC engaged with/developed teacher competency standards frameworks, and the MNEC, having developed a TCSF framework in Year 1, focused on the development of a complementary CPD framework. As a result of activity across Change Area 2, strong foundations are in place for further planning around continuous professional development modalities and ensuring teacher competency frameworks can be embedded into everyday teaching practice. In line with continuing efforts for the recognition of ethnic teachers, MEC continued to play an important role as interlocutor and where relevant and appropriate, partners continue to be exposed to on-going national reform initiatives, to explore alignments for example with the MoE Teacher Competency Standards Framework or the National Framework for Equitable Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Change Area 3: School and Community Leadership and Management

Outcome 2.1 # and % trained head teachers that show increased adoption of leadership

Outcome 2.2 # and % of complementary education schools in targeted education system that have basic plans for school improvement (SIP)

Outcome 2.3 # and % of school committees (SC), school management committees (SMC) and/or Parent Teacher Associations that demonstrate functionality/ inclusiveness

Outcome 2.4 # of schools receiving active support (in cash or kind) from parents and communities

Progress Marker 3.3.1 MEC partners implement (quality) training program for school leadership

Progress Marker 3.3.2 MEC partners implement training program for school committees/ PTAs on effective management

Recognising the critical contribution of head teacher, parent and community engagement in student achievement and learning outcomes, MEC continued to place a concerted focus on the further development of whole school approaches to school management and leadership in order to nurture improved learning environments for children. Here the program met or exceeded targets for three out of four outcomes. In Karen areas, the KECD conducted a review and revision of its head teacher manual and competency assessment tools. In Mon areas, through a series of inter-woven initiatives across the MNEC system, education officials conducted a review and upgrade of approaches to head teacher and school committee development, resulting in a revision of head teacher training materials, and with subsequent trainings delivered to pilot the new materials. In monastic education, MEDG conducted mentoring across 337 schools, with a focus on financial management, general administration, student affairs, attendance registers and data recording systems for students transfer.

Change Area 4: Access through Non-Formal Education (NFE)

In Year 2, MEC sought to place a decreasing emphasis on NFE and ECCD in line with its revised strategy and further refining of objectives in complementary education. At the outset of the operating period, MEC committed to supporting MEDG to implement its NFE program, and across the academic year, MEC and MEDG continued to engage with, monitor developments and advocate for NFE within an evolving alternative education reform context.

Change Area 5: Management of Human, Physical and Financial Resources

- Progress Marker 5.5.1 MEC partners have developed (or updated) and implemented HR and financial policies.
- Progress Marker 5.5.2 MEC partners provide adequate training and awareness raising around HR and financial policies to schools
- Progress Marker 5.5.3 Leaders of MEC partners have strong leadership skills and apply these.
- Progress Marker 5.5.4 MEC partners coordinate, communicate and network with other complementary education providers

In supporting systems strengthening through a focus on the management of Human, Physical and Financial Resources, the program demonstrated substantial progress against targets. Here, acknowledging that approaches for the strengthening of learning outcomes require stable and agile underpinning structures, all four partners continued to receive ongoing support on organizational development and capacity strengthening through workshoping, reflection, learning and planning exercises, monitoring loops and learning-by-doing mentorship. Through MEC support, partners identified and acted on self-identified priorities for the strengthening of systems around financial and human resource management, procurement and supply chain, fraud and anti-corruption. Building upon these initiatives, shifts toward Institutional Development will continue into Year 3 in order to strengthen further partner agility in a rapidly evolving environment.

Supporting Teacher Stipends

Through the operating period, 6,002 teachers were provided with a stipend contribution through MEC. The payment of teacher stipends is a core foundational activity of each system, upon which strengthening activities across all Change Areas are built. Adequate payments for teachers mitigate the risk of high attrition and recognize the role of classroom practice in achievements towards increased learning outcomes. In this manner, the provision of teacher stipends acts as a precondition for systems strengthening, rather than as a maintenance mechanism. MEC's payment of teacher stipends for Karen and Mon teachers in Year 2 provided space for a focus on systems strengthening, for further engagement in dialogue around longer-term sustainability, and to recognize the potential for ethnic teacher experience to play a role in addressing Myanmar's teacher shortage into the future.

Change Area 6: Data Collection, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress Marker 4.4.1 MEC partners have systematic process in place for data collection and storage systems.

Progress Marker 4.4.2 MEC partners have systematic process in place for analysis of M&E data for future planning and evidence-based advocacy

In recognition of the need for education systems to have strong and integrated processes for collection, management and use of data, and in order to promote effective planning, budgeting and monitoring, across ethnic and monastic systems, MEC set out to enhance its emphasis on MEL in Year 2. Here, MEC completed the development of a Results Framework that nestles partner frameworks within it in order to build on the significant experience of partners. Given the differentiated nature of partner contexts across ethnic areas, education portfolios, priorities, experience and challenges in MEL, the development of a coherent, comprehensive framework across the partner-base is a significant achievement. Aligned with this, MEC carried out a baseline study and analysis that resulted in valuable insights for verification against situational analyses conducted in Year 1 around gaps in measurements, modalities currently in use, areas of priority and associated rationales and challenges associated with MEL.

Across the Change Area, the program made significant advancement against both progress markers, with partners supported to enhance data management systems and internal procedures through policy development/revision. In Kachin areas, with the support of Metta, the KED developed and piloted new tools for MEL, whilst SJN-CBE and KEF continued to conduct regular monitoring to assess and strengthen teaching and learning in Kachin and Northern Shan states. In Karen areas, the KESS continued to explore opportunities for information management strengthening with the KTWG engaging in exploration on the use of Kobo. In Mon areas, the MNEC reviewed and updated field tools, and provided refresher trainings across nine townships. Through the operating period MEDG continued to engage with opportunities for the strengthening of data management structures across monastic education, through capacity-building training and central level analysis of alignment potential with the Myanmar MoE mechanisms, for example the School Quality Assurance Standards Framework (SQASF).

Change Area 7: Policy Engagement, Advocacy and Research

Impact 4.1 Instances (policies, frameworks, guidelines) where complementary education is recognized in GoUM reforms

Impact 4.2 MEC partners increasingly receive financial or technical support from GoUM

Outcome 3.1 MEC and partners have identified and addressed barriers to functioning MTB-MLE (local, state or/national)

Outcome 3.2 MEC and partners initiate and participate in policy discussions on complementary education

Progress Marker 6.6.1 MEC partners create/sustain relationships with MoE representatives & parliamentarians or other influencers

Progress Marker 6.6.2 MEC partners design and conduct joint initiatives for policy influencing

Toward the objective of supporting the transition to a more enabling policy environment, and across Change Area 7, results were mixed. Despite continuing engagement in policy level dialogue at differing levels, challenges associated with broader political dialogue and conflict affected progress. MEC's contribution to the strengthening of ethnic and monastic systems is deeply inter-connected to the political and policy environments in which systems operate, and MEC's Change Area 7 recognises the inter-play, where changes in classrooms, systems or in national laws may alone be insufficient in driving meaningful change. MEC's objective 2 focuses on the development of a coherent, inclusive national education system, brought about through a more enabling environment where changes in policy and practise address barriers to inclusion. MEC set out to address technical and policy barriers that currently prevent the recognition of the ethnic complementary systems, to provide new spaces for dialogue and to influence the direction of basic education reform. Whilst acknowledging the complexity and sensitivity of the issues, and the uncertainty across a highly fluid socio-political environment, MEC continued its efforts as facilitator or in direct engagement, in order to promote positive changes, increase dialogue, and support evidence-based messaging.

Myanmar Education Partnership Project

Through the operating period, MEC formed a partnership with the World Bank to engage in strategic joint research and generate strong empirical evidence around potential collaboration and dialogue on education between state and non-state providers. The partnership resulted in the initiation of the MEPP- the Myanmar Education Partnership Project in order to respond to commitments laid out in the NESP on the development of a partnership mechanism between the MoE and non-state education providers. The development of the MEPP demonstrates progress toward MEC's objective 2 and represents the first structured piece of work to explore channels for dialogue between state and non-state actors. Specifically, the work promoted pathways to align with state-level dialogue where many issues have remained unresolved. Through the MEPP, MEC supported consultations led by a team of international and national experts to enable increased and targeted dialogue on areas of potential collaboration, and to deepen understandings across MoE of MEC partners and smaller/less-'ready' complementary systems.

Whilst challenges for EBEP/MoE coordination continue to exist in Karen and Mon areas, and is deeply interconnected with the process of political dialogue and confidence in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, MEC has continued to identify and carve out appropriate spaces for engagement where possible. At partner level, MEC support has provided opportunities for policy paper development, capacity development for key stakeholders, the participation of ethnic providers in forums, inter-ethnic coalition building and policy engagement at state and national level. In Mon state MNEC maintained a prominent role in inter-ethnic coalition building, along with engagement with the state-level education offices in Mon and Kayin to discuss transfer certificates, joint invigilation and grading of MNEC matriculation examinations and MNEC teacher participation in MoE curriculum trainings. MNEC senior staff were invited to play a key role in the MoE's local curriculum development. In monastic education, MEDG continued advocacy around the Monastic Education (Baka) Draft Law.

The founding of a Baka Master Planning Group (or Monastic Education Sustainability Group), with a similar structure to MEDG, and tasked with planning for the future of the monastic sector has presented both opportunities and challenges for co-ordination. In Kachin and Shan, socio-political movements, and conflict continue to constrain capacity for policy engagement. At community level, both SJN-CBE and KEF conducted community-level activity around the Child Rights Convention (CRC), and encouraging SMCs and parents to explore their role in schooling, as well as to promote child protection.

Strategic Facilitation Fund (SFF)

MEC's innovation funding grants have been utilised to forge new partnerships since 2013, and in the 2018-2019 year, MEC continued to utilise the grant architecture to explore broader technical or geographic areas of work and/or to promote learning of value in the pursuit of its two objectives. Through the operating period, the SFF was utilised to provide innovation fund support for Knowledge Platform, a Singapore-based education provider, in order to encourage the production of learning and evidence-based numeracy programming in Northern Shan state. Through the project, implemented in ten SJN-CBE schools in Year 2, children were supported to enhance skills in numeracy across Grades 3, 4 and 5. It is evident from the baseline and results that utilising the SFF has enabled Knowledge Platform and SJN-CBE to have an impact on learning achievement in Math for students, and on the teaching skills of the participating teachers. Students in Grades 3 and 4 improved by a significant margin of 36% and 108% respectively, while students in Grade 5 maintained performance. Outcomes also indicated that 'Group 1' students, who consisted of the lowest ability students demonstrated the largest improvement. It is believed that the notable improvements in Grade 4 students were motivated by two related factors; firstly, this grade had the lowest performance rate during the maths pre-assessment with an average score of 43% and secondly, poor performance of Grade 4 students was highlighted in the initial teacher workshops, along with strategies identified for targeted support for the children's learning.

8 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Gender and Inclusion

All partners have committed to implementing MEC Gender Guidelines. In Kachin, Nyein led workshops on gender and disability for teachers, principals, education officers and parents. Over the operating period, Nyein conducted a gender inclusion audit, and in line with Metta's *Regeneration Spring Strategy*⁴, both agencies have committed to incorporate gender mainstreaming as a programmatic theme. Across the year, the need for an enhanced focus on gender aspects of MEC's programming was observed, which will form a key component of the 2019-2020 operating plan.

Child Safeguarding

In line with priorities identified through the first year of the program, MEC sought to place a stronger emphasis on Child Safeguarding across both ethnic and monastic systems. In monastic education, MEC's Child Safeguarding Specialist (CSS) worked with MEDG to improve the safety of children in schools and strengthen safeguarding in the organization.

Activities aimed at Improving Safety in Monastic Schools

In consultation with MEDG trainers, three training manuals were developed, two of which were integrated into the teacher training package:

- (i) Child Rights in School
- (ii) Safe (Violence free) School
- (iii) School-based Child Safeguarding Policies

Here, MEC trained, mentored and coached three child protection trainers and a national advisor at MEDG to provide training for 28 teacher trainers and 15 administration trainers. Subsequently, MEDG trainers provided training for 136 monastic teachers and principals. Child protection trainers visited and trained in schools, which resulted in 26 schools having drafted Child Safeguarding policies by mid-Q3. Following the recommendations and guidance of MEC's CSS, the MEDG team developed training materials (videos, booklets) to enhance the quality of training and improve acceptance of child protection by monks. Training events on positive discipline for teachers were provided for 154 participants; MEDG trainers, school staff and monastic teachers. The CSS trained MEDG's four trainers and with them conducted child safeguarding training for 60 staff at the organization on their duty to keep children safe.

Across the 2018-2019 period, safeguarding systems have been strengthened internally at MEC to support staff to integrate CSS principles and action into all aspects of programming. Through cross-sharing at MEC Reflection Learning and Planning workshops, ethnic partners were exposed to activity on child-safeguarding in monastic schools, and on MEDG's efforts in support of child safeguarding in practice. Subsequently, ethnic partners risks were mapped in order to identify safeguarding status and to plan actions. A child safeguarding incident reporting process between partners and MEC was developed, along with child safeguarding minimum standards. The CSS provided six child safeguarding sessions and training for partners, supporting one partner to identify mitigation measures and three other partners to plan actions.

⁴ *Metta's Regeneration Spring Strategy outlines strategic objectives for the period 2014-2017 to guide its specific initiatives and projects. Key areas of focus are placed on Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Livelihoods, Essential Services, Humanitarian Response, Research and Advocacy, Strengthening Civil Society and Strengthening Branch Offices, with cross-cutting themes identified throughout.*

9 MANAGEMENT

MEC Management

Contractual, reporting and transactional components of partner finance were migrated to the SCI Country Office, aiming to strengthen compliance and controls, and to enable MEC team to work more closely with partners on programme relationships and systems development. In order to strengthen MEL, a PMEL Director and a new team were recruited to ensure adequate staffing for MEL requirements at MEC.



Future Directions

As MEC moves into the third year of the phase, senior management and steering committee representatives conducted a joint Phase 3 visioning exercise in order to explore future pathways for MEC. The exercise built upon previous dialogue around MEC's strategic direction and worked to generate and identify further sources of evidence to guide decision-making processes. It was agreed that a comprehensive review of MEC would provide valuable input into considerations around next steps and presents an opportunity for all MEC stakeholders to take stock of achievements, challenges, the evolving environment and technical and strategic directions.

Risk Management

Through a comprehensive risk management matrix, MEC has ensured tracking of risk and of mitigation activities in the operating period. Only minimal shifts were identified through the operating period; in Finance, MEC sought to mitigate risk through tailored architecture, along with the completion of risk and capacity assessments, the development of joint mitigation and review activities. Communications and travel in conflict areas continued to pose risk, which were mitigated through for example enhanced flexibility in planning. Funding patterns continued to change, and the program responds with tools to strengthen systems for procurement, resource management and allocation of priorities for determining fund agreements.

Lessons in Summary

Across the operating period, MEC, including partners, experienced challenges in securing timely technical expertise, which impacted on systems strengthening interventions, and required the development of alternative solutions for recruitment and procurement. In areas of technical support provision, for example capacity-development for mother-tongue-based multi-lingual education, MEC identifies a continuing need to ensure the institutionalising of initiatives, in recognition of partners and systems absorption capacity. Similarly, conflict and broader socio-political factors impacted progress and reinforced the need for flexibility and adaptability of activities. Whilst the development of the participatory Results Framework represents a significant achievement, its alignment with the operating period timeframe, budgets and plans presented a new set of challenges. With the foundations and controls now in place, MEC will be in a stronger position to monitor and utilise data strategically.

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