Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC) Advocacy Strategy 2014 -2016

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Introduction

Historically, there has been limited space for civil society organisations working in education in Myanmar to advocate for the right to education on behalf of all the children of Myanmar. Civil society organisations have focussed mostly on education service delivery outside of the government system with very little engagement with the Ministry of Education. These services have targeted some of the most vulnerable children who dropped out of school or never had the opportunity to go to government schools. These organisations are well placed to advocate to the government and the general public on behalf of the most vulnerable children. Opportunities to campaign together as a group and advocate on behalf of these children were few, apart from an annual public awareness raising campaign on UN CRC day.

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

The 2012 commitment by the Government of Myanmar to undertake a Comprehensive Education Sector Review, the first review of education in Myanmar in 30 years, provides a valuable opportunity for civil society to participate in public policy development and sector reform more broadly. To do so influentially and credibly requires civil society to approach policy advocacy in an organised and well informed manner. A few civil society advocacy networks have recently emerged to engage with the education reform process, including National Network for Education Reform (NNER) and Myanmar/Burma Indigenous Network for Education (MINE).

The Myanmar education reform process presents an opportunity for the Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC) to play an important facilitation and support role to improve civil society's efficacy in policy engagement. A platform for establishment and/or support of civil society coalitions is needed, as is financial assistance and capacity development to support capabilities that international research has demonstrated are a necessary for civil society to influence public policy: research, understanding the policy-making process, organisational development, and advocacy skills.

1.   Advocacy Objective

The advocacy objective of the MEC is: *Legal frameworks and government policy **formulated or changed** through **civil society** engagement to ensure quality education for **every child** in Myanmar.*

The MEC will engage proactively with the Government of Myanmar to support education sector reform to enable sustainable improvements in education for poor and disadvantaged children, particularly those in **hard to reach** populations and settings.

MEC defines **hard to reach** children and young people, as *those who are not engaged with, or are disengaged from, the usual range of education and participatory activities that are designed for them*. **Hard to reach** can also mean the 'underserved', those for whom there are no services available or for

whom current services contain significant barriers to access. Barriers to access might include socio-economic status, geographic remoteness, disability, language and gender.

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

Specific objectives and indicators are as below:

Specific Objectives	Indicators
Disability 1. All disabled children have access to mainstream or special schools 2. All teachers are trained to teach disabled children	- Development and inclusion of the inclusive education module in teacher training at teacher training college at the national level - Budget allocation by the Ministry of Education for special education, inclusive education and IEC materials on disabled children in mainstream schools - All new schools constructed must be accessible for disabled children, enforced by the Ministry of Education - SQAF measure inclusion and accessibility
Non-formal Education (NFE) 1. Out of school children have access to NFE services	- Non-formal Education and Non-formal Primary Education included in the NESP and education budget - NGO NFE programmes accredited by the Ministry of Education, and NFE facilitators certified - CLCs running functional literacy programmes by Ministry of Education Standards
Ethnic Minorities 1. All teachers trained on multilingual education 2. Ethnic minority teachers outside the government system recognised	- Inclusion and recognition of ethnic teachers in teacher competency framework - MLE module included in teacher training

2. Context Analysis

Poverty remains a key factor preventing educational access and outcomes in Myanmar. An estimated one quarter of Myanmar's 62.4 million[1] people live in poverty, and this figure rises to 73 per cent in some ethnic minority areas[2].

Among the Universalization of Primary Education (UPE) targets, the Gross Intake Rate, Net Intake Rate, Gross Enrolment Ratio, and Current Public Expenditure in Primary Education as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are likely to be achieved in Myanmar by 2015[3].

However, such targets as Net Enrolment Ratio, Promotion Rates at Grades 1, 4 and 5, Percentage of Children having reached Grade 5, and Survival Rate are less likely to be achieved by 2015. This finding shows that many students drop out from school before completing primary education. Most school dropout cases are related to economic reasons.[4]

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

- Poverty and discrimination; while education is intended to be free there are both direct and indirect costs;
- Language: around 30% of children do not have Myanmar as their mother tongue[5];
- Gender: data suggest an overall parity but girls are the first to be removed from school for financial or other reasons;
- Disability: only 708 children have access to special schools;
- Conflict and natural disasters have a significant impact on children's ability to attend school;
- No formal mechanisms to reach out to school children who do not attend school due to age or other reasons.

In the last five years, the government has increased expenditure on education (from 0.6% of GDP in FY 2009-2010 to 2.1% of GDP in FY 2013-2014) [6] and also distributed free textbooks to all primary school students; provide scholarships to outstanding students; and stipends to students from poor families; and constructed more schools in villages and border areas. Compared to the ASEAN member states, however, Myanmar's education expenditure is still below the 3.3% regional average.[7] Budgets currently focus on salaries and goods and services rather than being explicitly linked to outcomes.[8]

MoE also plans to initiate the basic education structural reform in AY 2015-2016 moving to KG+12 years. A new curriculum framework is currently being drafted as an effort to improve learning outcomes. The School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAF) that is currently being drafted will also contribute to ensuring improvements in quality education. With just over a third of students passing the high school

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[1] International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook Database,* October 2012.
[2] UNDP and Myanmar Government, *Independent Household Living Conditions Assessment*, 2010.
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
5Immigration and Population Department, Ministry of Immigration and Population, *Myanmar Population Changes and Fertility Survey*, 1995.

[6] MOE (March 2014). *CESR Phase-2 Report (Draft)*

[7] UNICEF (2013). *Snapshot of Social Sector Public Budget Allocations and Spending in Myanmar*, Yangon, p.36.
[8] Myanmar Education PER 2014

matriculation exam, the assessment and examination systems needs further review and investment as well.

According to the 2014 Myanmar EFA report, Literacy Gender Parity Index (LGPI) and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) at the primary school level, Gender Parity and Equality is not an issue in Myanmar. Although enrollment in primary education attains almost gender parity, new gender differences appear when children transition to middle school. 78% of boys transition to middle school compared to 75% of girls. Transition to middle school is also affected by scoioeconomic status. 32.5% of households stated that the reason for not transitioning to middle school was due to the cost not being affordable. This leads to transition rates of only 69% for poor boys and 64% for poor girls[9]. Transition to high school is also affected by socioeconomic status but the role of gender is reversed. 87% of students on average transition to high school with a greater percentage of girls transitioning than boys regardless of socioecomic status. Also, regional differences exist and girls are at a disadvantage in access to secondary school in Rakhine and Shan (North).

In addition, the monastic schooling system, regarded as an education safety net for the poor, has 7 per cent more boys than girls enrolled. One explanation given for this difference is that families experiencing economic hardship will choose to send their son to school over their daughter and monastic schools are often the least costly schooling option.[10] While school enrolment rates are relatively equal between boys and girls, women are more likely to be illiterate than men.[11] In addition, due to the lack of schools in ethnic areas (there is one school per 25 villages in ethnic areas, compared to one school per two villages in other parts of the country) many girls need to travel long distances, which could increase the risk of sexual and gender-based violence.[12]

Disability is another factor that prevents access to education. Globally, children with disabilities are less likely to start school and they have lower rates of retention and completion.[13] Rigid curricula, inadequate training and support for teachers, physical barriers and negative attitudes are all barriers preventing children with disabilities being fully included in education.

According to the 'First Myanmar Basic Disability Survey 2008-2009,' conducted by The Leprosy Mission International in conjunction with Myanmar Department of Social Welfare, 62.9% of people with disabilities, aged 5 and above, had never attended school. And of those that did attend school, only 35% progressed beyond primary school. As the first comprehensive poll on disability prevalence and conditions for people with disabilities, colloquial definitions of various disabilities may have resulted in underestimating the prevalence of individuals with developmental and mental challenges. Even so, the rate of primary completion is very similar to the poorest quintile as reported by MICS.

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[9] SUPPLEMENTARY APPENDIX — revised 3 February 2014 Updated Analysis of Education Access, Retention, and Attainment in Myanmar, with a Focus on Post-Primary Education, CESR Phase 2
[10] MEC, *Description of Action*. 16.
[11] UNFPA, Gender Briefing Kit, 2011.
[12] Ibid.
[13] World Health Organisation, *World Report on Disability*, 2011. 206–207.

Table 1 - Children with Special Needs

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

*Source: UNESCO, Myanmar Country Report August 2009.
^Based on 7,000,000 Statistic reference by UNESCO and 200,000 in Monastery by MRA.

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

Children with physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as other vulnerable groups, are specifically recognised as a target group in GoM inclusion strategies.[14]Despite this plan, education services for children with disabilities are still limited. While some disabled children are able to access education (whether appropriate to their needs or not) the vast majority, or 62.9 per cent, of people with disabilities aged five and above have never attended school.[15]

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

Poverty, over one hundred and thirty national races and conflict situations, create challenges that affect the education sector[16]. The Government has responded to access issues in remote areas by prioritizing these areas for the deployment of daily wages teachers, However, even though the daily wage teacher initiative tried to address this issue of inequitable deployment of teachers, greater emphasis is needed on ensuring teachers are deployed to underserved rural schools and remote schools and that they have the necessary local language skills, particularly at primary level[17]. The National Education Law of 2014 states that regional administrations are responsible for arranging and organising reciprocal links and movements of students between State and other types of schools[18]. Regional administrations are also allowed to develop 20% of the school curriculum to meet the needs of the local population.

The education context in ethnic areas presents both challenges and opportunities for improving basic education in Myanmar. Challenges exist in ethnic education systems, as elsewhere, to ensure adequate

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[14] Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education, *Country Report: Myanmar Education Development Strategy Focusing on Inclusive Education*, October 2008,http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/myanmar_NR08.pdf, accessed 15 May 2012.
[15] UNESCO, *Myanmar Country Report*, 2009 as cited in MEC design, 15.
[16] Ibid
[17] CESR Basic Education
[18] National Education Law 2014

access and quality. Further, there is a need to strengthen convergence with the Government system to ensure that students educated in ethnic systems are able to take advantage of further education pathways and employment opportunities which may exist outside of their ethnic area. Engagement with ethnic education systems presents invaluable opportunities to learn from the experience of ethnic education stakeholders, for example around mother-tongue instruction, without which comprehensive education sector reform is not possible.

The evidence is clear that starting their education in the language they know best allows children to build a strong foundation, which then enables them to make an effective transition into other national or international languages in due course[19]. Many of MEC's partners implement complementary education projects in geography areas in which Burmese is not the mother-tongue language spoken by the majority of the people. Some partners have developed teaching materials and provide instruction in the mother-tongue while teaching Burmese as a second language.

The newly enacted Myanmar National Education Law (September 2014) recognises Myanmar and English as languages of instruction. However, it also states that if there is a need, ethnic languages can be used alongside Myanmar as language of instruction at the basic education level. This is a very welcome change in final enacted version of the law due to advocacy from various groups on this topic.

Since 2012, the **Ministry of Education (MOE)**, with support from a range of stakeholders and Development Partners including donors, NGOs, UNICEF and UNESCO, has initiated a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). This CESR is planned as a two year process which takes place over three phases – Phase 1 Rapid Assessment (Oct 2012 – March 2013), Phase 2 in-depth analysis (April – Dec 2013-delayed to June 2014) and Phase 3 the development of a national education sector plan (NESP) (June – July 2015). This changing context is providing significant openings and opportunities but makes for a complex planning environment.

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

3. Stakeholder Analysis

- **Ministry of Education national level authorities:** Through the CESR processes and the JESWG platform, the MEC has opportunities to influence policy makers and to facilitate civil society inputs into policy formulation. The **Education Promotion Implementation Committee (EPIC)** was established by the President's Office at the end of 2013 to complement the work of the CESR. The Committee was tasked to set up 18 sub-sector working groups and to draft various education policies through these groups. The MEC was invited to join the working group on non-

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[19] http://www.unescobkk.org/resources/e-library/publications/article/why-language-matters-for-the-millennium-development-goals

formal education. The MoE-led **Joint Education Sector Working Group (JESWG)** established under the instruction of the **Foreign Economic Relations Department (FERD)** serves as the main coordinating mechanism within the education sector. A number of DPs are represented on the JESWG, including MEC Founding Partners, Save the Children and Burnet Institute.

- **Parliamentary Education Committee**

- **State/Regional and Local level authorities:** MEC will work with partners to develop capacity for awareness raising of and engagement with state/region and township authorities on 1) children's right to education and 2) social accountability on policy implementation.

- **Development Partners:** Through the CESR process, there has been increased coordination with the establishment of a Development Partners (DP) group for education stakeholders, including donors, financial institutions and INGOs. In these relatively recent institutional relationships, the MEC has a unique opportunity to contribute towards greater coherence and collaboration amongst a wide range of other education focussed agencies.

- **Education Thematic Working Group (ETWG):** The ETWG is currently the main forum for technical and policy discussions for all education actors in Myanmar. With the support of the co-chairs (UNICEF and Save the Children), the MEC was able to share the following with the ETWG: introduction to the MEC, consultation with group members to give inputs into the design and planning of the MEC and to invite them to take part in the organizational mapping.

- The ETWG also have a number of **sub-groups (ECCD, NFE, Education and Disability, MLE Working Group, and DPRE)**. The ECCD sub-group was instrumental in developing the new ECCD law and multi-sector ECCD policy. Most of these groups have strong links with MoE and other government technical staff and have in the past worked closely with government and UNICEF to develop technical expertise in the sector (for example ECCD minimum standards) as well as policy development (CESR, EPIC and NESP). The MEC is work with these networks to develop advocacy capacity as well as mobilisation for campaigning and policy influence. MEC will foster the involvement of civil society in these kinds of groups, preferring this to creating new ones. Where there is a need for other coalitions to form, they will be based as much as possible on locally expressed need rather than MEC setting the agenda.

- **MEC local and international civil society partners:** Most of the MEC's capacity development efforts will be focussed on developing advocacy and research capacity within these organisations. Most of these organisations will already be part of existing networks (like NNER and MINE) and therefore will be instrumental in assisting the MEC to mobilise networks for policy advocacy and campaigning. The MEC founding partners are three prominent INGOs working in education in Myanmar. They implement education projects across Myanmar, including some hard-to-reach areas (MEC year one map of operations available). As well as having strong technical expertise, they are also very influential and knowledgeable about the context as a whole and more specifically the education sector. Among MEC's new local partners, the Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) is strong in advocacy, especially on disability inclusive education.

- **Civil Society Networks:** The **NNER** was founded in 2012 and is led by the Thinking Classroom Foundation. They organised broad civil society consultation on the draft national education law and tabled an alternative education law in Parliament. They have also been building CSOs' capacity on issues like inclusive education and mother-tongue based multi-lingual education (MTB-MLE). **Myanmar Indigenous Network for Education (MINE)** was established in 2014 and is advocating for MTB-MLE to be recognised in Myanmar's new education legislation and policies.

- The **Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR)** is a key partner in the ECCD sub-sector. The strong collaboration between all the various actors in ECCD has contributed to the fact that ECCD is ahead of the other sub-sectors in terms of policy-making and implementation.

- **General Public:** Awareness raising campaigns on the right to education for all children will be targeted widely at all relevant stakeholders (parents, children/youth, guardians, teachers, administrators, etc.)

Based on the Stakeholder Analysis, these are the target stakeholders for each of the following objectives:

Objective	Target Stakeholders
Disability 1. All disabled children have access to normal or special schools 2. All teachers are trained to teach disabled children	National Level Targets - Minister of Education - Education Committee in Parliament - JESWG - EPIC - Education Advisors - Education focal minister of the President's office - Construction companies - Minister of Social Welfare - Parliament members interested in education - Department for education planning and training (DEPT) State and Regional Level Targets - Education Supervisor - TEO and headmasters - Teachers' Union - Parent-teacher association - School-aged children Allies: - MEC Partners - Disability sub working group (ETWG) - School construction sub working group (ETWG) - Yaungzin Group

	- UNESCO - UNICEF
NFE 1. Out of school children have access to NFE services	**National Level Targets** - Minister of Education - Education Committee in Parliament - JESWG - EPIC - Education Advisors - Education focal minister of the President's office - Parliament members interested in education - Department for education planning and training (DEPT) **State and Regional Level Targets** - Education Supervisor Allies: - MEC Partners - NFE sub working group (ETWG) - UNESCO - UNICEF
Ethnic Minorities 1. All teachers trained on multilingual education 2. Ethnic minority teachers outside the government system recognised	**National Level Targets** - Minister of Education - Education Committee in Parliament - JESWG - EPIC - Education Advisors - Education focal minister of the President's office - Parliament members interested in education - Department for education planning and training **State and Regional Level Targets** - Education Supervisor - TEO and headmasters - Non-State Actors - Religious leaders Allies: - MEC Partners - Mother tongue sub working group (ETWG) - MEDG - Yaungzin Group - UNESCO - UNICEF

4. Key Advocacy Messages

5.1 Disability:

1. Across Myanmar, 7-in-10 disabled children are not enrolled in school, because their parents do not think it is necessary or schools do not accept them. Even for those that go to school, 65% of those drop out during or after primary school.
2. Disabled children require an education as much as any other child, in order to develop and gain knowledge that will help them thrive in adulthood. However, most government schools in Myanmar are not equipped with the teachers and infrastructure to cope with disabled children in their classrooms, and special schools are not widely available for children in rural areas. It is vital that these change so all children, disabled or not, have access to education.
3. The current education law should be amended to include provisions for the disabled and teachers must be trained to teach and help disabled children to develop

MEC will advocate for newly formulated laws and policies to make provision for disability inclusive education as part of the formal education system. MEC will seek commitment from the MoE to provide resources to implement disability inclusive education more widely in Myanmar in terms of teacher training, assistive devices, making schools accessible, adapting curriculum, etc.

5.2 Non-Formal Education

1. In Myanmar, only 1-in-3 children completed primary school in 2010, which means many lack the skills and knowledge to thrive later in life. In such instance, non-formal education is essential in supporting out of school children to gain the literacy they need.
2. Non-formal education service providers have been supporting out-of-school children for years, ensuring they attain basic literacy and numeracy. However, many of these providers and facilitators are not formally accredited and certified, which leaves the vocation unrecognised.
3. In order to ensure good quality non-formal education for out-of-school children, it is essential that Non-formal education service providers and facilitators are formally accredited and certified respectively. Resources also need to be allocated to community learning circles to ensure that children receive the best quality education they can get.

5.1 Ethnic Minorities:

1. Most ethnic children in Myanmar cannot speak Myanmar language, which means they are taught in primary school in a language that they cannot understand. Research shows that children's learning outcomes improve with they are taught in their mother tongue, a recommendation that the Myanmar government has sought to address by passing a law that allows children to learn in their mother tongue for the first three years of primary school.
2. In many ethnic minority areas, however, many teachers have been teaching in community schools using the mother tongue, without any certification. These teachers have been trained by technical experts in non-government organisations in Myanmar as well as in formal institutions in neighbouring countries. They are well-equipped to teach children effectively, but remain unrecognised.

3. These ethnic minority teachers that have contributed to the development of children in society should be credited for their efforts and be recognised in the teacher competency framework. To continue developing better education for ethnic minority children, it is also essential to develop a curriculum for training teachers in multilingual education, and adequate investment and resources are required to roll it out effectively.

MEC will continue to advocate for the recognition of the value of mother-tongue based multi-lingual education in the sub-sector laws and relevant policies. MEC will advocate for the promotion of locally developed curriculum as part of a broader advocacy agenda around a more decentralised education system.

MEC will advocate for a system for recognition of education services delivered by community, faith-based and ethnic education schools that currently fall outside of the formal government system. This includes recognition of learning as well as teacher qualifications.

5. Advocacy Approaches

6.1 Research and Evidence:

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

An absence of accurate data and statistics presents a significant challenge for gaining a holistic picture of the education landscape in Myanmar. Improving the volume, quality and analysis of data available to inform policy development and program implementation in Myanmar, is crucial to enable sustainable improvements in the sector.

Opportunities now exist through the CESR and discrete research activities to contribute to this knowledge base and in doing so, support the development of policy and programming informed by credible evidence. Research findings under the CESR, for example, will be used to develop a fully costed national education sector plan in 2015 which will be a critical exercise for shaping future Government expenditure on education. The international community has an important strategic opportunity to offer financial support and technical assistance to improving data availability and quality in Myanmar at the present time and laying the foundations for positive and lasting change in the sector.

6.2 Joint in-country Public Awareness Raising Campaigns:

The MEC would like to create more public awareness on the right to education for all children in Myanmar. To achieve this, the MEC will mobilise its partners and other existing networks for awareness raising campaigns. Existing networks that MEC is working with include (but is not limited to):

6.2 1 Non-Formal Education (NFE) working Group: This is a sub-group of the ETWG. The purpose of the network is to coordinate activities among organizations working in NFE and to facilitate policy and technical discussions.

6.2.2 NGO Child Rights Working Group (NCRWG): This group focuses on child rights more generally rather than just education. They are active in raising public awareness on child rights issues. In November 2013, the MEC co-sponsored the annual UN CRC day celebrations organized by the NCRWG.

6.2.3 Myanmar Network of NGOs (MNN): This is the main coordinating network for local NGOs, together with the Local Resource Centre (LRC).

6.2.4 Education and Disability sub-working group: MEC co-chairs this group with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO). The group will focus on advocating for the rights of children with disabilities and will encourage disabled people's organisations (DPOs) to lead advocacy initiatives.

6.3 Child and Youth led advocacy

In Myanmar, there are few opportunities for children/youth to raise their voices through their participation in the policy formulation and its implementation. With regard to this, MEC will enable children and young people to raise their voices on education issues that affect them and their peer group within 1) their community and then 2) national Level.

Child/Youth-centered advocacy is where children are involved in the advocacy strategy in such as way that their interests are central and their voices are clearly heard. Advocacy activities should be based on needs as expressed by children, and not as perceived by adults.

Child/Youth-led advocacy is where children carry out the advocacy on issues that are of major interest to them, and MEC or other adults support them to carry out the advocacy.

MEC will bring them to be involves as the advocates and provide the relevant information, including knowledge on policies and laws related to education, through child friendly methods which recognize diversity (gender, age, ethnic groups, and disability) and takes into consideration the children's ages, languages, abilities, etc.

6.4 Information Sharing and Knowledge Management:

The MEC will mobilise its partners and existing networks to share lessons learnt, examples of good practice and data from field research, in order to inform advocacy initiatives.

6.5 Policy Dialogue

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

6.6 Civil Society Capacity Development:

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

6.7 Coalition building

Advocacy efforts from the MEC will also be directed at encouraging civil society groups to collaborate more effectively both on policy engagement and technical interventions. MEC's aims for civil society to be seen as a key contributor to policy reform as well as a leader and innovator in quality education initiatives.

The MEC aims to support development of a broad-based coalition of non-state education actors. Joined up, skilled, informed and innovative, this coalition will be positioned to engage in policy debate and reform ensuring a more representative diversity of contributions.

MEC is collaborating with ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education) on the development of a CSO education coalition in Myanmar (under the Global Campaign for Education) through capacity development workshops and regional experience-sharing with coalitions from other countries. The priority for the MEC is to identify a local non-party political organisation to lead a CSO education coalition as soon as possible.

MEC will also continue to work with new and existing networks (mentioned earlier in this document) on joint advocacy initiatives and capacity development efforts.

6. Activity Plan 2015

Objective	Date	Activities

Disability
 	
1. All disabled children have access to normal or special schools
2. All teachers are trained to teach disabled children
	16-31 May
	
	1 June
		Popular mobilisation/campaign
		
		- Content Gathering trip for KMSS
		- Event for International Children's Day in Pathein with both KMSS and MILI
		    o Targeted at local authorities, teachers, parents, peer groups and general public
		    o Overall objective is awareness and acceptance
		    o Children/Teachers/Parents will have an opportunity to share their experiences
		    o Media Engagement at the event
		    o Social media around children's messages and pictures/quotes
		    o Celebrity engagement on social media and a video message
		    o The disability law may be out by then – so quote sections of it
		    o Opinion piece on a Myanmar language paper
		    o To include inclusive education messages from Save the Children.

	6-30 June
	 26 July
	
	 Through Oct
	 3 December
		- Content Gathering trip for MILI
		 - Media engagement plan for Parents' Day
		    o Interview parents about their experiences with educating children with disabilities
		 - Social Media blast: 30 children, 30 days. You and I, we're the same
		 - Roundtable discussion on International Day of Persons with Disabilities
		    o Publicise Research
		    o Working through the sub working group
		    o Presentation on research findings
		    o Panel Discussion on suggested topic on education for children with disabilities

	1 Nov	**Research** - Based on VSO's findings on disabled children and their education in Myanmar, build on the research topic and hire a researcher to take this forward. Target date for completion is 1 November
	11 Mar April	**Lobbying** - At the NCRWG lobbying session, develop a policy brief on state budget around disability, NFE and MTB-MLE - Encourage partners to attend and participate in NESP Regional Consultations
NFE I. Out of school children have access to NFE services	11 Mar April 13 Feb Throughout July/Aug 8 Sep	**Lobbying** - At the NCRWG lobbying session, develop a policy brief on state budget around disability, NFE and MTB-MLE - Encourage partners to attend and participate in NESP Regional Consultations **Media** - Event with S4Sk on Myanmar Children's Day - Using the media, strategically secure spots for talk shows and documentaries on channels that are viewed/listened to by target audience as well as youth - Working with the media to film a documentary around NFE - Event on international Literacy Day, potential café film screening that will showcase the importance of NFE through CLCs and NFE centres for out of school children **Social Media** - On International Literacy Day, have a social media moment

	8 Sep	with an infographic or a photo collage; as well as a call to change the cover picture.
		Research
	No target date yet	- Develop a research topic and hire a researcher on the situation of out of school children in Myanmar and the importance of NFE to help them attain basic literacy and numeracy
Ethnic Minorities 1. All teachers trained on multilingual education 2. Ethnic minority teachers outside the government system recognised	No target date yet 11 Mar April 20 June	**Research** - Based on Shalom's research on MTB-MLE, build on the research topic and hire a researcher to take this forward. **Lobbying** - At the NCRWG lobbying session, develop a policy brief on state budget around disability, NFE and MTB-MLE - Encourage partners to attend and participate in NESP Regional Consultations **Event** - Event on World Refugee Day with the ETWG, circulating the Beyond Access report and the short video done by Save the Children in Thailand **Media** - Encourage partners to take part in television debate, such as DVB