JOINT EDUCATION SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT, NORTH RAKHINE STATE, MYANMAR

MYANMAR

ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Cover photo: Basic education primary school, Myebon township. ©REACH

About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org.
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SUMMARY

The situation of the education sector across Rakhine state is of serious concern. Standards fall well behind the rest of Myanmar across a wide range of indicators, from primary and secondary enrolment to teacher/student ratios. Problems in the Rakhine's education sector have been attributed to a range of inter-connected factors, including poverty and underdevelopment, shortages of schools and teachers, limited teacher training opportunities, inadequate and dilapidated structures and facilities, shortages of materials and the low quality of the education delivered.

Problems in Rakhine's education sector have been exacerbated by historical inter-communal tensions between Buddhist and Muslim communities, particularly since the most recent eruption of conflict in 2012. An estimated 60,000 children aged 3-17 years residing in internal displacement camps are not accessing formal education, while existing education facilities in communities hosting displaced populations have been put under tremendous strain.[1] More broadly, concerns over security have weakened teacher attendance in conflict-affected areas, while a combination of movement restrictions and ongoing tensions have raised additional barriers to children's attendance of often-distant middle schools and high schools.[2]

Three years since the outbreak of conflict, donors and aid agencies are seeking to expand the scope of assistance activities in Rakhine beyond the provision of humanitarian aid to encompass more early recovery and development-focused programming. In this changing context, REACH was mobilised to facilitate a joint education needs assessment for the Rakhine Education in Emergencies (EiE) Sector. The objective of the assessment was inform medium-term programming, planning and advocacy strategies by providing evidence on the current state of education quality, utilisation and access. The assessment covered schools and communities in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Sittwe, Pauktaw, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya and Myebon townships, and was conducted in collaboration with EiE sector partners Plan International, Save the Children International, Lutheran World Federation and UNICEF.

Data collection took place between September and October 2015. The study adopted a mixed methods approach of 1) a purposively-sampled assessment of villages and schools in order to assess school utilisation and quality; and 2) age and gender-segregated focus group discussions (FGDs) in order to assess barriers to school access, as well as to provide a deeper contextual understanding of village/school assessment data. The assessment was not designed to produce statistically representative data, but to highlight important issues and trends in the education system across the study area. In total, the team assessed 148 learning spaces in 116 villages, spread over a total of 19 village tracts in 9 townships. Assessed education facilities included 77 basic education and branch schools, 9 affiliated schools, 2 monastic schools, 1 temporary learning space (TLS), two adolescent spaces and 55 madrasahs. Four focus group discussions were conducted in each township, resulting in a total of 36 discussions. Each set of four discussions included one group of male parents, female parents, male school-age children and female school-age children. Key findings are as follows:

School systems[3]

- A large majority of children across the study area rely on government-run basic education schools for their education. Branch and affiliated schools occupy only a small proportion of enrolment at primary level, although the former become more prominent at middle and high school level. Outside the curriculum, madrasahs are widespread in Muslim areas and well-attended by

[1] Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Education in Emergencies Rakhine Strategic Plan
[2] Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH) – Rakhine State Needs Assessment (Yangon, 2015); Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps for the Sector (Sittwe, 2013).
[3] Please refer to p. 7 for more detailed definitions of each of the school types discussed in this report.

younger children. However, they are widely seen as complementing formal education rather than as a replacement for it.

- Coverage by basic education schools varies significantly between townships. In Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships, fewer than half of all communities have a basic education school. These figures are also low for Minbya and Sittwe townships, where around 60% of communities have a basic education school.

Enrolment

- Across all townships, secondary data suggest that up to half of all drop-outs from the basic education system take place during primary grades, especially between grade 1 and grade 2.
- Secondary data also indicate that the ratio of female to male students is low in Maungdaw and Buthidaung compared to other townships. This trend is especially pronounced at middle and high school levels, where the ratio is less than 0.5 in Maungdaw/Buthidaung (closer to 0.25 in Maungdaw) compared to over 1 in most other study townships.

Teaching and learning

- Basic education/branch schools spend an average of 5.2 hours/day teaching students, compared to 4.6 hours in affiliated schools. However, these numbers are complicated by the fact that around 17% of basic education schools are forced to run multiple shifts due to overcrowding.
- Primary level teacher-student ratios are well above Ministry of Education targets of 30:1 across the study area, lowest in Sittwe and Mrauk-U at 22:1 and 33:1 and rising to 83:1 and 123:1 in Buthidaung and Maungdaw.
- Poor attendance by teaching staff was widely reported as a problem by FGD participants across all study townships. 29% of teachers at assessed basic education/branch schools were absent on the day of assessment team visits, compared to 25% of teachers at affiliated schools.
- Especially in Muslim and other minority language areas, basic education schools can be heavily dependent on (mainly male) community-paid teachers to supplement or replace missing government staff. Community-paid teachers were working in 32% of basic education/branch schools, where they make up 43% of the workforce. In Muslim areas in Maungdaw/Buthidaung, government teachers reportedly attended schools so infrequently due to security concerns that a parallel education system staffed by volunteers was effectively operating within the shell of basic education school infrastructure.
- In basic education/branch schools, 83% of teachers had graduated from grade 10 or higher.

Infrastructure

- A total of 55% of assessed basic education/branch schools are permanent buildings made of wood, brick or concrete. A further 32% are made of semi-permanent materials such as bamboo or palm, while 13% occupy temporary structures. Only 11% of assessed affiliated schools occupied permanent structures.
- A lack of classroom partitions means that large numbers of students across multiple grades are regularly taught in the same room. In basic education/branch schools, the average number of students per classroom was 85.
- Only 4% of basic education/branch schools demonstrated evidence of retrofitting to prepare for natural disasters. Similarly, only 5% of basic education/branch schools had any form of disaster response plan in place.
- In general, assessed learning spaces performed poorly across a range of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) indicators. While 74% of basic education/branch schools have at least one functional latrine, only 32% have gender segregated latrines. Where schools did have latrines, they were used by an average of 102 students each. In addition, only 35% of basic

education/branch schools had any kind of hand washing facilities available near their sites, and only 31% had access to a year-round source of clean water.

Access

- All FGD participants listed poverty—specifically costs associated with attending school—including fees (where applicable), materials, transport and uniforms—and the need to have children work to support the household—as the main reason why children dropped out of school across all grades.
- A majority of FGD participants also cited distance to school as a major reason for non-attendance. This was corroborated by village level assessment data, which found that 78% of primary-school aged children in villages with a curriculum-teaching school are attending school, compared to 63% in those without. This gap is more pronounced at middle school age (72% versus 40%) and high school age (40% versus 18%).
- Student attendance was generally observed to be weaker in Muslim villages than in Buddhist villages. In Buddhist villages, 85% of children of primary school age are attending school compared to 69% in Muslim villages. These figures were 84% versus 30% at middle school age and 41% versus 25% at high school age. This disparity was found to hold true regardless of whether or not schools are present in village.
- Reflected above in the low gender parity ratios for Maungdaw/Buthidaung, gender is an additional factor limiting access to schooling in Muslim areas in particular. Muslim FGD participants reported that girls in their communities tended to stop going to school after they hit puberty to avoid them mixing with men, and so that they could help their families at home. By contrast, the study also detected a small tendency for more girls than boys to attend schools in Buddhist areas.

It is important to consider all of these findings in the wider context of a shifting funding environment among both donors and the government. Myanmar's education budget is expanding rapidly and the results of this can clearly be seen at field level: many FGD participants noted positive changes in teacher attendance and school infrastructure taking place after the implementation of free primary education in the 2014/15 academic year and recent raises in teacher salaries. At the same time, donor and agency interest in Rakhine is beginning to expand beyond the scope of humanitarian provision to place greater emphasis on early recovery and development activities. While these trends represent a clear opportunity for major improvements, they also represent an important challenge, both in terms of coordinating and targeting aid and assistance effectively, and of avoiding the risk of exacerbating existing inequalities in the state's polarized and sensitive political climate.

List of Acronyms

BEHS	Basic Education High School
BEMS	Basic Education Middle School
BEPS	Basic Education Primary School
CDNH	Centre for Diversity and National Harmony
CWDs	Children with disabilities
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FGD	Focus group discussion
GPI	Gender parity index
IDP	Internally displaced person
IHLCS	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
KII	Key informant interview
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODK	Open Data Kit
SED	State Education Department
TEO	Township Education Officer
TLS	Temporary Learning Space
VT	Village tract
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

List of Definitions

Affiliated school: A school teaching the government curriculum, attached administratively to the nearest basic education school in the community for students who reside at a distance from the basic education school, and mainly supported by the community.

Basic education school: A government school under the administration and supervision of the Ministry of Education.

Branch school: A school teaching the government curriculum, attached administratively to the nearest basic education school in the community and supported by the government for students who reside at a distance from the basic education school.

Monastic school: A school teaching the government curriculum, run by Buddhist monks under the administration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Temporary learning space (Rakhine context): A learning environment set up to serve children affected by disaster or conflict who can no longer attend basic education school. TLSs are managed by education sector partners or Township Education Officers, teach the government curriculum, and seek to mirror education services of basic education schools.

Madrasah: A religious learning space teaching the Qur'an and associated Islamic texts, set up and run by communities and operating independently of the government curriculum and outside of Ministry of Education supervision.

Primary school education: Grades 1-5, covering ages 5-9

Middle school level education: Grades 6-9, covering ages 10-14. "Post-primary" schools may teach additional grades from grade 6 up to grade 8, but only middle/branch middle schools may teach gread 9. Middle/branch middle schools generally tend to start at grade 1.

High school level education: Grades 10-11, covering ages 15-17. High schools and branch high schools generally start at grade 1.

Geographic Classifications[4]

State: the highest level of administrative sub-division in Myanmar along with regions, as well as self-administered zones/divisons, and the Naypyidaw Union Territory. States differ from regions in that they contain large numbers of ethnic minority populations.

District: The level of subnational governance below the state, formed of several townships.

Township: The level of subnational governance below the district, formed of multiple village tracts and urban wards, and normally focused around one large population centre at the township capital. This is where the lowest levels of government office are located.

Village tract/urban ward: The lowest level of administrative boundary division. A village tract is an area of territory composed of several villages, while an urban ward is an area within a town or city.

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[4] For a comprehensive overview of Myanmar's subnational governance structure, see Hamish Nixon et al., - State and Region Governments in Myanmar (Yangon, 2013), and Kyi Pyar Chit Saw and Matthew Arnold – Administering the State in Myanmar: An Overview of the General Administration Department (Yangon, 2014).

1. INTRODUCTION

A combination of geography, history and ethno-regional politics at the Union level has slowed down social and economic development in Rakhine and it now ranks as one of the least developed states in Myanmar. Physically, Rakhine is isolated from the rest of the country, largely cut off by inaccessible ranges of mountains and hills. Within the state there are few paved roads, with transport links in several areas being limited to weather-dependent boat routes.[5] The 2009-2010 Integrated Household Living Condition Survey ranked Rakhine state as second worst countrywide in terms of overall poverty (43.5% compared to the national average of 25.6%) and food poverty (10% against the national average of 4.8%).[6] Subsequent World Bank re-estimation using the same data recently revised overall poverty incidence in Rakhine upwards to 78%—the highest in the country compared to a revised national average of 37.5%.[7] According to recent census data, Rakhine also has the highest rates of unemployment in the Union, (10.4% compared to 4.0%) and the lowest rate of labour force participation (58.8% compared to 67.0% nationwide).[8] The state also fares poorly on a range of other sectoral indicators including maternal health (67% antenatal care coverage compared to a Union average of 83%) and water, sanitation and hygiene (30% of households with access to improved drinking water and sanitation compared to a Union average of 72%).[9] This under-development, the limited opportunities it brings, and the complex ethnic politicization of the state is deeply linked to the continued inter-communal conflict in Rakhine.

The situation of the education sector across Rakhine state also lags well behind much of the rest of the country. Adult literacy rates are around 75% compared to Union levels of 91%.[10] The state also currently ranks bottom of the country for primary and secondary net enrolment rates (71% and 32% respectively compared to Union averages of 88% and 53% respectively);[11] primary completion rate (32% compared to 54%);[12] and for gender parity indexes (GPIs, expressed as the ratio of girls to boys) at both primary and secondary levels (0.94 and 0.85 compared to Union averages of 1.01 for both levels).[13] These issues have been attributed to a range of inter-connected factors, including poverty and underdevelopment (increasing the possibility that children will be kept out-of-school to work and support their family), shortages of schools and teachers, limited teacher training opportunities, inadequate and dilapidated structures and facilities, shortages of materials, and the low quality of the education delivered.[14] Gaps in the coverage of government schools are currently supplemented by a range of different institutions also teaching the government curriculum—including affiliated schools set up and funded by communities, monastic schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and non-governmental organisation (NGO)-run temporary learning spaces (TLSs)—as well as parallel education structures such as madrasahs and church schools run entirely beyond the remit of the government.

Problems in Rakhine's education sector have been substantially exacerbated by the inter-communal conflict between Buddhist and Muslim communities that has affected the state since 2012. An estimated 60,000 children aged 3-17 years residing in internal displacement camps are not accessing formal education, while existing education facilities in communities hosting displaced populations have been put under tremendous strain.[15] More broadly, concerns over security have weakened teacher attendance in

[5] United Nations Development Programme – Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine (Yangon, 2015)
[6] United Nations Development Programme – Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar (2009-2010) (Yangon, 2011).
[7] World Bank Group – Myanmar: Ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity in a time of transition: A systematic country diagnostic (Yangon, 2014).
[8] Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population – The 2014 Population and Housing Census: The Union Report (Naypyidaw, 2014).
[9] Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development / Ministry of Health / UNICEF – Myanmar Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2009-2010 (Yangon, 2011)
[10] UNDP – Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar (IHLCS) (2009-2010) (Yangon, 2011).
[11] Ibid.
[12] MICS 2009-10.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Education in Emergencies Rakhine Strategic Plan 2015.
[15] Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Education in Emergencies Rakhine Strategic Plan

conflict-affected areas, while a combination of movement restrictions and ongoing tensions have raised additional barriers to children's ability to attend often-remote middle and high schools.[16]

Education has been widely cited as both a contributing cause of and part of a possible solution to Rakhine's current conflicts. As a root cause, it is seen to form part of the overall nexus of under-development and under-investment which has characterised Rakhine's current peripheral status relative to the Union centre, weakening both the social contract with the government and social cohesion across different communities in the state.[17] As an immediate driver of current conflict dynamics, under-education has also been linked to a young population vulnerable to manipulation by ethnic leaders, and poorly-equipped to process the proliferation of propaganda disseminated by a newly-liberalised press and rapidly-expanding social media sphere.[18] As a possible solution, improving education has been cited as a long-term means to reduce inter-community hostility by providing a means to improved livelihoods and broader socioeconomic development;[19] to contribute to strengthening damaged state-society social contracts through providing services for all; and to contribute to cohesion between communities by fostering mutual understanding and developing social capital.[20]

Currently, the activities of the Education Sector in Rakhine have been focused largely on providing short and medium-term education in emergency (EiE) interventions—such as running and staffing TLSs and providing education supplies—to populations directly affected by conflict, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities and surrounding communities. With the current crisis entering its fourth year and a switch in political and donor focus towards the return of displaced communities in some areas and wider "early recovery" activities, Education Sector partners have identified a need to bridge current EiE activities with an increased focus on broader and longer-term education programming and advocacy efforts in the state. In this respect, a critical lack of data was identified as a major barrier to the development of future programming. In particular, partners wanted to develop a better understanding of quality and utilization of education opportunities among both government schools and alternative learning spaces; of how these different learning spaces interact and function as a system; and of how users perceive this system.

To address this gap, REACH led a joint education sector needs assessment in collaboration with education sector partners Plan International, Save the Children International, Lutheran World Federation and UNICEF. The assessment covered Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Sittwe, Pauktaw, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya, and Myebon townships—the main townships affected by violence in 2012—with the overall objective of informing medium-term education sector programming, planning and advocacy strategies in Rakhine state. In order to achieve this objective, the assessment sought to:

- Identify key educational gaps as well as key capabilities/entry points for sector support;
- Identify key factors affecting the utilization of education services (primary, secondary, non-formal) at both school and community level in the 9 identified townships; and
- Identify how cross-cutting issues (such as physical isolation, natural environmental risks, ethnicity, gender, age and socioeconomic status) affect utilization of education services.

The remainder of this document is organized as follows. First, the study's methodology and limitations are outlined. Second, the findings of the study's secondary data review are examined. Third, the findings of the study's field data collection component are detailed, and finally a summary of conclusions and recommendations are presented. Research tools are included in Annexes 1-4.

[16] Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH) – Rakhine State Needs Assessment (Yangon, 2015); Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps for the Sector (Sittwe, 2013).
[17] Josephine Roos – Conflict Assessment in Rakhine State (Yangon, 2013)
[18] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps.
[19] Center for Diversity and National Harmony – Rakhine State Needs Assessment; Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Education in Emergencies.
[20] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps.

2. METHODOLOGY

The target population for the study was defined as follows: 1) school staff and village authorities in Maungdaw, Rathedaung, Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Sittwe, Pauktaw, Minbya, and Myebon townships; and 2) school-age children and their parents in the above townships. In order to answer its research questions, the study adopted two separate primary data collection methodologies, focusing respectively on questions related to the supply side (schools) and demand side (users) of the education system. These were in turn supported by a parallel review of available secondary data on schools in the study's target area.

Supply side – education systems mapping

In order to understand what kinds of learning space are prevalent across the study area, who uses them, and how they compare in terms of quality, the study decided to conduct an exploratory mapping of education systems at the village tract (VT) level.

First, VTs were purposively selected according to the level of school coverage present, defined as how many villages in each VT had a government-run school. In each township, one VT with "strong" coverage (high number of schools per village) and one similarly-sized VT with "weak" coverage (low number of schools per village) were purposively selected, with a total of 19 VTs assessed.[21] In order to identify appropriate VTs, lists of basic education schools and branch schools obtained from township education officers (TEOs) were used to map school coverage for all villages in each township. For each VT, the total number of schools was subtracted from the total number of communities in order to calculate the number of communities without a school in each VT. VTs with the highest number of communities without schools (top quartile) were classed as "weak" coverage VTs, while VTs with the lowest number of communities without schools (bottom quartile) were classed as "strong" coverage VTs. After classification, specific VTs to be assessed were selected based on population size and logistical feasibility (meaning that large VTs with dozens of inaccessible villages were excluded as unfeasible given the available budget and timeframe). See Map 1 for a display of the VTs assessed in each township.[22]

Within each VT, a blanket assessment of all villages and all schools was carried out using a two-stage approach. In each village, an initial key informant interview (KII) was carried out with a village administrator or other community leader selected for his or her knowledge of the education sector. This interview collected data on populations of school-aged children and their estimated level of participation in education, and was also used to identify all learning spaces functioning in the village.[23] Subsequent KIIs (involving a component of direct observation) were then conducted with administrators and staff at each learning space identified to collect data on school-level indicators such as student and teacher attendance, classroom sizes, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities etc. KIIs at both community and school level took the form of structured questionnaires based on modified versions of existing education needs assessment tools.[24] Al tools were translated into Myanmar and collected via the open data kit (ODK) smartphone application, to allow for instant data entry and cleaning. The tools and approach were tested in one pilot VT in Sittwe prior to being refined and rolled out across the study area. Questionnaires were administered by a gender-balanced team of enumerators under the supervision of

[21] Two contiguous "strong" VTs in Sittwe were assessed as a single unit due to the small size of VTs there relative to other townships.
[22] One VT in Minbya was found to contain fewer basic education schools than anticipated. It was therefore classified as "intermediate" and has been excluded from the analysis of "good" versus "poor" VTs.
[23] Categories of learning spaces were agreed with education sector partners as follows: Government; Branch; Affiliated; Monastic; TLS; Youth centres; and Religious schools. Although they do not teach the government curriculum, it was decided to include religious schools on the basis that they are institutional in nature and may complement, compete with or replace the government system, and therefore serve as an entry point for education sector partner intervention. For this reason, informal tuition sessions based on the government curriculum and run by private tutors were not included on the basis that they lack this institutional character and represent more transient transactions between private individuals.
[24] See Global Education Cluster – The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit (Geneva, 2010).

a REACH Field Coordinator. The team contained members fluent in both Rakhine, and languages spoken in Muslim communities. While questionnaires could not be translated into all languages for legal reasons, the team were rigorously briefed on all questionnaires in order to minimise translation errors.

This approach allowed for a comparative analysis of education systems between different kinds of VT, based on the hypothesis that these would have different characteristics depending on the level of school coverage present. In addition, it allowed for a comparative analysis of school quality and facilities across different types of learning space. Finally, it allowed for the most efficient use of time and resources in the context of Rakhine's poor transport networks by clustering villages/schools together by VT rather than spreading them out over a wide area through random selection. It should be noted however that as a consequence of this approach, quantitative data from this component of the assessment is only directly representative of the areas and schools assessed, and **not statistically significant** for either the study townships or study area as a whole. It should therefore be interpreted as **indicative of key broad trends** rather than representative of the wider geographic areas covered by the assessment.

Demand side – Focus Group Discussions

In order to collect data on users' perceptions of the school system as well as to triangulate findings from school/community-level KIIs, nine sets FGDs (one per township) were conducted across the study coverage area. Site selection for each set of FGDs was made in order to gather and compare data from a wide range of contexts, including both strong and weak education coverage—ranging from villages with small affiliated schools to villages with a basic education high school—accessible and remote areas, and communities from different ethnicities (see Table 1). In order to use resources effeciently, all FGDs took place within VTs selected for inclusion in the systems-mapping component of the study described above.

Table 1: Study FGD site characteristics

Township	Main religion	Schools nearby
Maungdaw	Muslim	Post-primary, madrasah
Buthidaung	Muslim	Affiliated primary, madrasah
Rathedaung	Buddhist	BEPS
Sittwe	Muslim	Affiliated primary, madrasah
Pauktaw	Buddhist	Branch BEHS
Kyauktaw	Buddhist	Branch BEHS
Mrauk-U	Buddhist	Post-primary, monastic post-primary
Minbya	Buddhist	BEPS, youth centre, church school
Myebon	Buddhist	BEPS

At each site, four FGDs of 8-12 people were conducted. In order to gather a range of different perspectives from users of different ages and genders, FGDs were disaggregated by both age and sex: one FGD in each was conducted respectively with male parents of school-age children, one with female parents; one with boys aged between 12 and 17; and one with girls of the same age group. Children under 12 were not included due to limited capacity within the research team of conducting research with younger children. Participants were identified with the support of community leaders, with specific requests made to include parents and children from different socioeconomic backgrounds and levels of participation in the school system. FGDs were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires and conducted by gender-matched facilitators. Information was recorded using smartphones, then translated by facilitators, and subsequently analysed using NVivo 11 qualitative coding software. Data were coded thematically in

line with the study's research questions, with greater importance ascribed to themes observed occurring across multiple different groups.

Secondary data review

The secondary data review included a desk study of available existing research on education in Myanmar in general and in Rakhine state, in order to provide a better contextual grounding for the analysis of primary data. As part of this process, the assessment also compiled and analysed available data from government education information management systems at the township level in order to better triangulate findings drawn from the assessment's own primary data.

Limitations

The research approach described above is constrained by the following limitations:

- **Representativeness:** As discussed above, constraints related to time, budget and the availability of sample frames meant that collecting statistically representative data was not possible. Mitigating this, every effort was made to triangulate data across different sources—including both surveys/FGDs, secondary data, and extensive debriefing of field teams—in order to ensure that conclusions drawn about key trends emerging from the data remain valid.
- **Accuracy:** The survey component of this study relied on key informant interviews at the village and school level. As a consequence, quantitative data on estimated levels of attendance/enrolment at the village/school level are based on careful estimates rather than exact numbers. In addition, it is possible that school administrators may have under-reported problems for fear of reprisal by supervisors. To mitigate these issues, data were triangulated against both secondary sources and checked internally for consistency. In addition, assessment teams were careful to emphasise protection of anonymity as part of obtaining informed consent for study participation.
- **Township disaggregation:** Due to the relatively small number of schools and communities sampled within each township, it has not generally been possible to extract a detailed picture of differences occurring between townships from the study's field data collection component. The exception to this is the situation in Maungdaw/Buthidaung, where clear differences were observed between these areas and other townships, and were supported by secondary data.
- **Learning space disaggregation:** During the research process, it emerged that the numbers of monastic, TLS, and church schools in the selected VTs were too low to allow for an adequate sample size to be collected for each type. It has therefore not been possible to include these space types in disaggregated comparative analysis of school-level indicators.
- **Capturing complexity:** Inevitably, the categories and approach imposed by the need for structured analysis has failed to capture the fluid and complex character of the education system in Rakhine as it currently functions. For example, in many cases the difference between a government, branch and affiliated school is largely academic—in some areas recently affiliated schools have been upgraded to government status without substantial changes in facilities or resourcing, while in others "government" schools are effectively community-run due to high levels of teacher absenteeism.
- **Teachers' views:** Owing to resource limitations and the focus of the study's research questions, the views and experience of teaching staff are largely absent from this assessment. This is an acknowledged gap and should represent a key focus of future research.
- **Conflict:** Given both the stated need of education sector partners to investigate issues beyond the current scope current emergency programming, and the presence of existing research on the issue,[25]

[25] See for example Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps; Save the Children – Conflict Sensitivity Review of SCI Education in Emergencies Programming (Sittwe, 2015); Save the Children – Education Rapid Needs Assessment and Response Recommendations: Sittwe Township, Rakhine State, Myanmar (Sittwe, 2013); and Save the Children – Confronting Obstacles of Inclusion with Relevance to People's Belief Systems, Perspectives and Experiences in Sittwe and Pauktaw, Rakhine State, Myanmar (Sittwe, 2015).

the assessment has not included camp settings or areas of displacement/return as a specific focus of analysis. It was also beyond the scope of this research to adopt conflict sensitivity/do no harm analysis as an analytical framework. However, it has included multiple instances of communities affected by conflict in the broader form of ongoing movement restrictions, constrained livelihood opportunities, and inter-community fear and hostility—all issues which feed into the broader analysis of issues affecting the education sector in the study area.

MYANMAR - North Rakhine State
Joint Education Needs Assessment Study Areas

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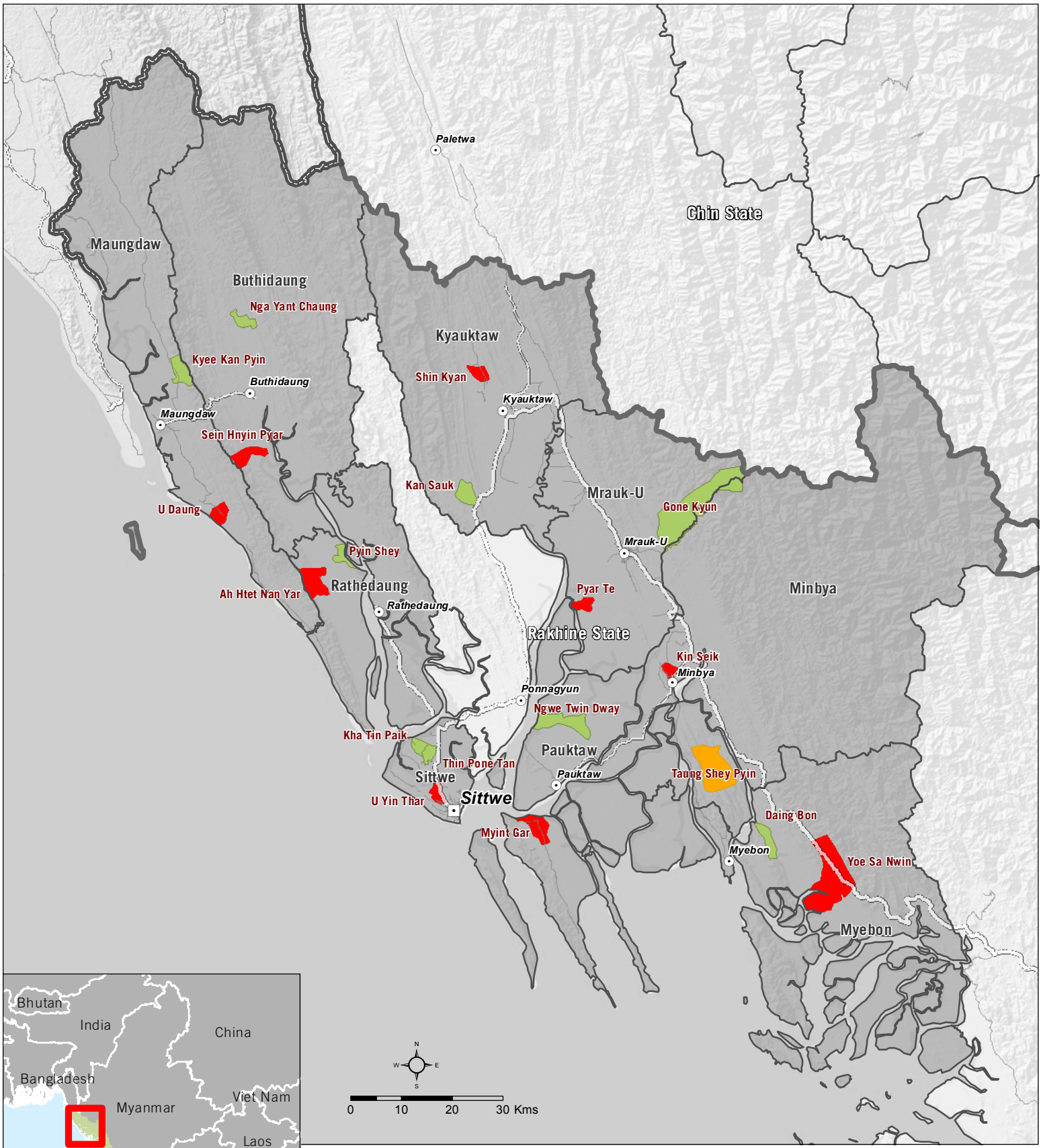


Study Township

Study Village Tracts

Good School Coverage

Intermediate School Coverage

Poor School Coverage

International Boundary

State Boundary

State Capital

Township Capital

Data sources:
Administrative Boundaries, Settlements: OCHA
Roads: OSM

Coordinate System:GCS WGS 1984
Contact: reach.mapping@impact-initiatives.org

Note: Data, designations and boundaries contained on this map are not warranted to be error-free and do not imply acceptance by the REACH partners, associated, donors mentioned on this map.

File: REACH_MMR_Map_Rakhine_EducationAreas_17NOV2015_A4

3. SECONDARY DATA REVIEW

This section provides an overview of key data from secondary sources reviewed for this assessment, including national-level household surveys, education-focused assessments, and raw data sourced from township education officers (TEOs) and UNICEF. It briefly discusses the structure of the education system in Myanmar as a whole, along with issues related to quality and barriers to access. It then looks in greater depth at the same issues in the context of Rakhine state. The review is not intended to be comprehensive and is likely to have missed available data from either government sources or "grey" literature from NGOs/UN agencies. Rather, it is intended to highlight key issues in order to better contextualise the results of the study's primary data collection component.

Myanmar's education system

As a whole, Myanmar's education system has suffered from years of under-resourcing from the Union government. In the years leading up to 2010, government spending on education was consistently under 1% of Gross National Product, well below comparative rates in other countries in the region (which ranged from 2.7% for Cambodia and the Philippines to 5.9% for Malaysia in 2010).[26] Following reforms in 2010, the Union government has rapidly ramped up spending on education, with the national education budget expanding by 368% over the past five years.[27] Nevertheless, this legacy of underspending continues to take its toll on the education system across much of the country, which faces significant limitations in terms of both access to and quality of state-provided education, especially in more remote rural areas.

The bulk of Myanmar's formal education system is made up of government-run Basic Education schools.[28] This is in theory divided into basic education primary school (BEPS) level (grades 1-5, ages 5-9), basic education middle school (BEMS) level (grades 6-9, ages 10-14), and basic education high school (BEHS) level (grades 10-11, ages 15-17), with middle and high schools generally running all the way from grade 1. All basic education schools are, in theory, fully resourced by the government and fall under the administration of the Ministry of Education (MoE). Since the 2014/15 academic year, basic education at primary level is technically free of charge, although in practice given Myanmar's long history of under-resourced education, an accumulation of small-scale costs ranging from cleaning supplies to examination fees are likely to continue to apply for some time to come. Middle school and high school education by contrast still remains fee-based. From the 2016/17 academic year, an additional year of schooling will be added—5-year-old children will be registered to Kindergarten instead of directly to Grade 1, and then join Grade 1 when they reach age 6.

Given the weakness of education coverage in remote areas—especially at middle and high school levels—a number of hybrid arrangements have emerged within the system as a means to meet demand in these contexts. First, an increasing number of BEPS are being permitted to upgrade to "post-primary" status, providing an extra 1-3 years of education after grade 5 as far as grade 8 in the absence of nearby middle schools, with these extra grades resourced by a mix of government and community resources.[29] Second, "branch" schools have been established in villages as offshoots of basic education schools nearby, offering a means for children to continue their education without having to travel large distances. These schools are in theory resourced by the MoE, with students learning at the branch school but sitting their exams at their associated basic education school. At middle and secondary level, a school may be a fully-integrated government facility for its lower grades, with only grade 9 (in the case of branch middle schools) or grades 10-11 (in the case of branch high schools) operated on a branch basis. Third,

[26] Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – Data Collection Survey on Education Sector in Myanmar (Yangon, 2013)
[27] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance, Trends in Rakhine (Yangon, 2015).
[28] Private schools have been allowed to operate in Myanmar since 2011 but so far form a minimal part of the education students and are attended mainly by students from better-off families.
[29] Government of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education (MoE) – National Education for All Review Report (Yangon, 2014).

"affiliated" schools may be established, which function in a similar way to branch schools, with the difference that they are set up and funded almost exclusively by communities. Ultimately, affiliated schools may be incorporated more fully into the formal system through conversion to branch or basic education schools, with the government taking on responsibility for teacher hiring and building upkeep.[30] Nationally, branch schools are substantially more prominent than affiliated schools, with 5,466 branch schools operating nationwide in 2014 compared to only 293 affiliated schools.[31] Fourth and finally, a small number of schools have set up boarding facilities for children travelling from nearby villages, although this was not observed in any of the learning spaces assessed for this study.

Alongside basic education schools and their branches/affiliates, monastic schools also provide primary and middle school education free of charge to children from poorer families. Although they are run separately under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, they use the basic education curriculum and award graduation certificates recognised by the government. Monastic schools tend to be supported by donations from their communities and occupy an important and respected position in the religious and social lives of the areas they serve.[32] A further means of accessing the curriculum outside of the conventional system are the non-formal primary education programmes run by the MoE, UNICEF and other donors. These provide an accelerated two-year programme aimed at allowing out-of-school older children a "second chance" to complete primary education.[33] Finally, NGO and MoE-run temporary learning spaces (TLSs) may also provide government-certified primary education and facilitate access to government examinations for children in conflict or disaster-affected areas where government school services are restricted or suspended.

Education quality

Despite rapidly increasing levels of government spending and foreign donor support to the education system in recent years, education quality in Myanmar faces a number of constraints. Teaching remains predominantly focused on rote learning rather than child-centred approaches, even as national teacher-pupil ratios improve.[34] In general, teaching also takes place exclusively in Myanmar language, with limited opportunities for children speaking other languages to receive education in their mother-tongue.[35] Although the textbook system is currently in the process of being overhauled and streamlined, many schools also continue to rely on outdated textbooks, often overloaded with content and printed on fragile newspaper.[36]

School infrastructure across much of the country is dilapidated, with many schools holding classes in single rooms without partitions and lacking adequate furniture.[37] Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure is also relatively limited—only 50.7% of schools nationwide have less than 50 students per latrine, 67.8% of schools have access to sanitation facilities (with only 26.7% providing soap), and 81.5% have access to an improved water source.[38] A recent baseline study on the monastic school system also notes that even where schools have "hard" WASH infrastructure such as latrines and had-washing facilities, water-borne diseases remain a major issue in the absence of adequate hygiene promotion activities.[39]

[30] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11: Myanmar (Paris, 2011), p. 12; MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 13.
[31] MoE – National Education for All Review.
[32] Burnet Institute Myanmar/Monastic Education Development Group (MEDG) – Monastic Schools in Myanmar: A Baseline Study (Yangon, 2014), p. 70.
[33] MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 15.
[34] Ibid, p. 41.
[35] MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 39; Enlightened Myanmar Research/Ministry of Education – Social Assessment: Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools Program (Yangon, 2014), p. 23.
[36] MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 32; JICA – Data Collection Survey on Education, p. 75.
[37] See unpublished UNICEF study cited in MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 31; Burnet/MEDG – Monastic Schools in Myanmar, p. 37.
[38] UNICEF – Myanmar WASH in Schools Country Profile (accessed 21 October 2015). Note that the standard of 50 students per latrine is drawn only from this profile and does not match either international standards or current government approaches.
[39] Burnet/MEDG – Monastic Schools in Myanmar, p. 6.

Barriers to education access

In general, existing studies highlight poverty, linked with a range of other factors, as the main barrier to accessing education in Myanmar. Nationally, net enrolment rates in primary schools were 80.1% in poor households compared to 87.2% in non-poor households in 2009/10, compared to 28.3% and 49.3% respectively for secondary schools.[40] At primary level, education is now technically free. However, schools may still impose a range of unofficial costs on students, such as fees to pay for school maintenance or extra staffing, to sit exams, or to purchase books, uniforms or other equipment. In addition, paid out-of-hours informal extra tuition run by school teachers is also common across Myanmar, and students may risk failing exams if they do not attend. Costs are also higher in areas without a primary school, since parents must either pay for transport and food costs if their children leave the village to attend school elsewhere, or pay for teaching and upkeep at community-run affiliated schools. Many of these factors are exacerbated at the middle and high school level, since parents must pay for textbooks and uniforms as well as transportation and sometimes boarding expenses. In addition to these economic "push" factors excluding children from education, working to provide extra income for families and the frequent labour migration of entire families also serve to "pull" children out of school.[41]

In terms of non-economic barriers, distance to schools remains a key issue. Parents are often reluctant to send very small children to other villages to attend schooling, especially when this may involve traversing difficult terrain during the rainy season. These fears are also echoed for older children given the greater distances involved in travelling to middle/high schools, and are especially acute in the case of adolescent girls. In ethnic minority areas, a lack of teachers able to speak children's mother tongue can present a major challenge for some children, especially in earlier grades.[42] Finally, inclusiveness for children with disabilities is also minimal. According to a 2010 national survey on disability, around two-thirds of disabled children were reported to have had no access to education, though this likely understates the issue since there are currently no standards for defining levels of disability among children.[43] Outside a small number of government-run special schools (mainly focused in Yangon and Mandalay, with none in Rakhine), there are currently minimal efforts made to accommodate children with disabilities within schools, either through the provision of dedicated infrastructure or through special training for teachers.[44] By contrast, gender is not generally perceived as a major constraining factor in access to education at the national level. The MoE's national education for all review states that "there is no gender disparity issue" at any education level, and that "in the Myanmar context, no social inequalities can be discerned between men and women or between boys and girls."[45]

Education in Rakhine

Socio-economic context

For a variety of historical factors including geographical isolation and political exclusion linked to its status as a separate cultural entity relative to the Bamar-majority core, Rakhine state has occupied an economically and politically marginalised position in post-independence Myanmar. As a transitional region between coastal south-east Asia and Bengal, there is a majority population of Buddhists, inter-mixed with a substantial minority of Muslims and a smaller population of Christians and other religions. According to the Rakhine Inquiry Commission, the population was 69.9% Buddhist, 29% Muslim, 0.75% Christian, and

[40] UNDP – IHLCS 2009/10.
[41] See Enlightened Myanmar Research/MoE – Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools, pp. 24-26; MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 41; JICA – Data Collection Survey on Education, pp. 28-31; Myanmar Development Resource Institute Centre for Economic and Social Development/The Asia Foundation – A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralization in Education: Experiences in Mon State and Yangon Region (Yangon, 2013), p. 10.
[42] Enlightened Myanmar Research/MoE – Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools, p. 27; JICA – Data Collection Survey on Education, p. 6; MoE – National Education for All Review, p. 39.
[43] JICA – Data Collection Survey on Education, pp. 78-80.
[44] Enlightened Myanmar Research/MoE – Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools, p. 21; Burnet/MEDG – Monastic Schools in Myanmar pp. 65-66. In Rakhine, the Sittwe education centre for blind children is a rare example of such provision.
[45] MoE – National Education for All Review, pp. 29-30.

0.35% other religions.[46] Muslim populations are generally concentrated in northern areas of the state from Myebon township upwards, and especially in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. Christian (mainly Chin-ethnicity) populations tend to occupy more remote areas in either mountainous or coastal regions around Myebon and Minbya townships. For a complex set of reasons, many of the state's Muslim population are not currently recognised as citizens by the Union government and therefore are unable to access the same rights as other inhabitants of the state.

Intermittent tensions between Buddhist and Muslim communities have characterised much of Rakhine's modern history, but erupted most recently and dramatically in 2012. For the past three years, much of the northern part of the state has been affected by an ongoing humanitarian emergency following outbreaks of violence that saw approximately 145,000 people—mainly Muslims—displaced into temporary camps, with many more affected by ongoing movement restrictions aimed at keeping the two communities separate for security reasons. This protracted and unresolved crisis has arguably contributed to the continued slow pace of economic and other development activities in the state.[47]

Performance on key indicators compared to the rest of the Union

Rakhine's education system is a stark reminder of its continued marginalisation from the rest of the Union: the state performs extremely poorly relative to the rest of the country across a wide range of education-related indicators. A summary provided in Table 2 below, derived from the 2009/10 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and 2009/10 Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, the most recent studies for which comparative Rakhine/Union-level data is available. As they demonstrate, the state is bottom of the country for both primary and secondary school attendance, as well as for gender parity.

[46] Government of the Union of Myanmar – Final Report of Inquiry Commission on Sectarian Violence in Rakhine State (Naypyidaw, 2013), p. 3.
[47] It is beyond the scope of this report to describe the history and the root causes of the current conflict. For more detail see Government of the Union of Myanmar – Final Report of Inquiry Commission, and International Crisis Group – Myanmar: The Politics of Rakhine State (Brussels, 2014).

Table 2: Rakhine state performance on key education access/attendance indicators[48]

Indicator	Rakhine	Union	Position relative to other states/ divisions/ regions (/17)
Children aged 36-59 months who are attending some form of organised early childhood programme	**5.40%**	5.4%	17
Students living within 1.23 miles of a primary school	**88.40%**	90.90%	11
Primary school net intake rate[49]	**63.90%**	74.40%	16
Primary school net attendance rate[50]	**75.80%**	90.20%	17
Primary school gender parity index[51]	**0.94**	1.01	17
Grade promotion rate from grade 1 to grade 5[52]	**93.40%**	93.30%	10
Secondary school-age children attending primary school	**16.20%**	11.90%	14
Primary school completion rate[53]	**31.70%**	54.20%	17
Primary school students per teacher	**41**	29	N/A
Transition rate to secondary education[54]	**94.90%**	95.30%	13
Students living within 1.23 miles of a secondary school	**23.30%**	33.90%	16
Secondary school net attendance rate	**30.90%**	58.30%	17
Secondary school gender parity index	**0.85**	1.01	17
Middle school students per teacher	**33**	35	N/A
High school students per teacher	**21**	25	N/A

School coverage in study townships

In order to better understand the situation at the township level, the assessment team analysed school lists and enrolment data provided by TEOs in the case of full/branch government schools, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the case of monastic schools. Information on the number and types of basic education, branch and monastic school present in each township is presented in Table 3 below. In terms of school coverage, Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships have proportionally fewer government schools relative to the number of villages they contain than all other study townships, with fewer than 50% of villages having their own school in both cases. Sittwe and Minbya are also relatively poorly covered, with only around 60% of villages containing a government school. Coverage is more comprehensive in Rathedaung, Pauktaw, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U and Myebon, with around 80% of communities hosting their own school in all cases.[55]

Table 3: Number of schools per study township by school level and type[56]

[48] Student/teacher ratios are from 2013-14 academic year: MoE Rakhine State Education Data 2013-14 academic year / MoE – National Education for All Review; Indicators related to school distance are from 2009/10 academic year: UNDP – IHCLS; all other indicators are from 2009/10 academic year: UNICEF – MICS. Note that MoE – National Education for All Review provides more recent figures for some of these indicators at Union level. However, MICS and IHCLS data are used here since they remain the most recent datasets that allow for comparisons between Rakhine, other areas, and the Union.
[49] Number of children of school entry age currently attending first grade.
[50] Number of children of primary school age currently attending primary or secondary school.
[51] Proportion of girls primary school net attendance ratio to boys primary school net attendance ratio.
[52] Proportion of children entering the first grade of primary school that eventually reach grade five.
[53] Number of children aged 9 attending the last year of primary school (excluding repeaters).
[54] Number of children that were in the last year of primary school during the previous school year that attend secondary school.
[55] These figures were calculated by dividing the number of villages in the official p-code database by the number of schools in each township. Figures given are approximate rather than exact proportions since some villages may have more than one school, while other villages in the database may no longer exist.
[56] Source: TEO school enrolment databases, August 2015.

	Primary school				Post-primary school						Middle school				High school		
	BEPS	Branch	Monastic	**Total**	To G5	To G6	To G7	To G8	Monastic	**Total**	BEMS	Branch	Monastic	**Total**	BEHS	Branch	**Total**
Maungdaw	40	21	1	**62**	77	0	8	5	0	**90**	1	13	1	**15**	5	11	**16**
Buthidaung	55	46	2	**103**	41	7	28	15	0	**91**	0	13	0	**13**	3	7	**10**
Rathedaung	91	16	0	**107**	3	15	9	28	0	**55**	3	14	0	**17**	6	4	**10**
Sittwe	73	0	4	**77**	1	2	9	6	1	**19**	6	4	1	**11**	10	6	**16**
Pauktaw	95	6	12	**113**	0	22	3	7	0	**32**	1	15	1	**17**	4	7	**11**
Kyauktaw	133	37	3	**173**	7	26	6	4	2	**45**	0	23	4	**27**	6	8	**14**
Mrauk-U	112	20	10	**142**	23	20	14	12	1	**70**	7	15	0	**22**	5	4	**9**
Minbya	123	0	3	**126**	20	9	18	3	0	**50**	2	18	2	**22**	3	8	**11**
Myebon	68	11	3	**82**	14	16	12	7	4	**53**	4	24	0	**28**	6	8	**14**

Table 4: Enrolment in branch/post-primary schools as a proportion of enrolment in government schools, by level

	Proportion of students grades 1-5 enrolled in branch BEPS	Proportion of students grades 6-9 enrolled in post-primary schools	Proportion of students grade 9 attending enrolled in BEMS	Proportion of students grades 10-11 enrolled in branch BEHS
Maungdaw	2%	5%	11%	48%
Buthidaung	2%	28%	9%	46%
Rathedaung	5%	16%	18%	18%
Sittwe	0%	12%	5%	14%
Pauktaw	1%	13%	18%	40%
Kyauktaw	4%	11%	26%	20%
Mrauk-U	2%	22%	17%	22%
Minbya	0%	16%	14%	48%
Myebon	3%	14%	22%	28%

Table 5: Enrolment in monastic schools as equivalent proportion of enrolment in government schools, by level[57]

	Primary (grades 1-5)	Middle (grades 6-9)
Maungdaw	0.1%	2.2%
Buthidaung	0.3%	0.0%
Rathedaung	0.0%	0.0%
Sittwe	5.8%	8.6%
Pauktaw	6.4%	2.1%
Kyauktaw	3.2%	7.9%
Mrauk-U	6.1%	0.5%
Minbya	4.1%	0.6%
Myebon	3.4%	3.2%

[57] Source: Rakhine monastic schools data, Ministry of Religious Affairs. Figures presented here represent the size of monastic enrolment relative to enrolment in TEO databases, not a proportion of total monastic plus TEO figures.

Overall, a majority of children in all townships attend full basic education schools at both the primary, middle and high school levels. At the middle school level (grades 6-9), post-primary schools account for a small but significant portion of enrolment, ranging from 5% in Maungdaw to 28% and 22% in Buthidaung and Mrauk-U respectively. It should be noted however that this proportion drops grade by grade, with relatively few children attending post-primary schools by grade 8. In addition, a relatively large proportion of schools technically registered as post-primary do not currently host any students beyond primary level (especially in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Mrauk-U and Minbya). This requires further clarification but may be linked to a lag between the addition of extra grades on the one hand, and the allocation of additional staffing resources or graduation of children into them on the other.

Branch schools account for a relatively smaller proportion of attendance at primary level (up to a maximum of 5% in Rathedaung). They are of substantially higher importance at the middle level, where they account for between 9% (Buthidaung) and 26% (Kyauktaw) of children enrolled at grade 9 level,[58] and even more so at high school level, where they account for between 14% (Sittwe) and 48% (Minbya and Maungdaw) of children enrolled at grades 10-11 (see Table 4). At both middle and high school level, the actual number of branch schools exceeds the number of full schools in the majority of townships.

Monastic schools are of negligible significance in terms of enrolment in Maungdaw and Buthidaung (likely due to the religious make-up of the area), but elsewhere they follow a similar pattern at primary level—educating up to the equivalent of 6% of children enrolled in branch/full primary schools in Pauktaw. However, they are less significant at the middle level—educating up to the equivalent of 9% of children enrolled in middle grades in Sittwe—and non-existent at high school level (see Table 5).

Unfortunately, no secondary data on the numbers and enrolment for affiliated schools were available at the time of assessment, meaning that a similar analysis of their coverage across townships and importance relative to other types of school was not possible. Given the relatively small numbers of registered affiliated schools reported nationwide by the MoE in 2014, they are unlikely to account for more than a small number of children in education in each township. A recent multi-sector needs assessment of conflict-affected areas in Rakhine state run by the Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH) found that 17% of people in the Muslim communities it assessed relied on affiliated schools.[59] However, the study focused on a purposively selected sample of villages directly affected by conflict (in terms of experiencing displacement or hosting/living in proximity to displaced populations) and may therefore represent a skewed picture relative to the state as a whole. In addition, this figure is likely to be complicated by the blurred line between government and community-run schools in some Muslim communities, in which schools technically run by the government are in practice staffed and resourced by communities due to widespread absenteeism among government teachers (see further discussion below).

School enrolment in study townships

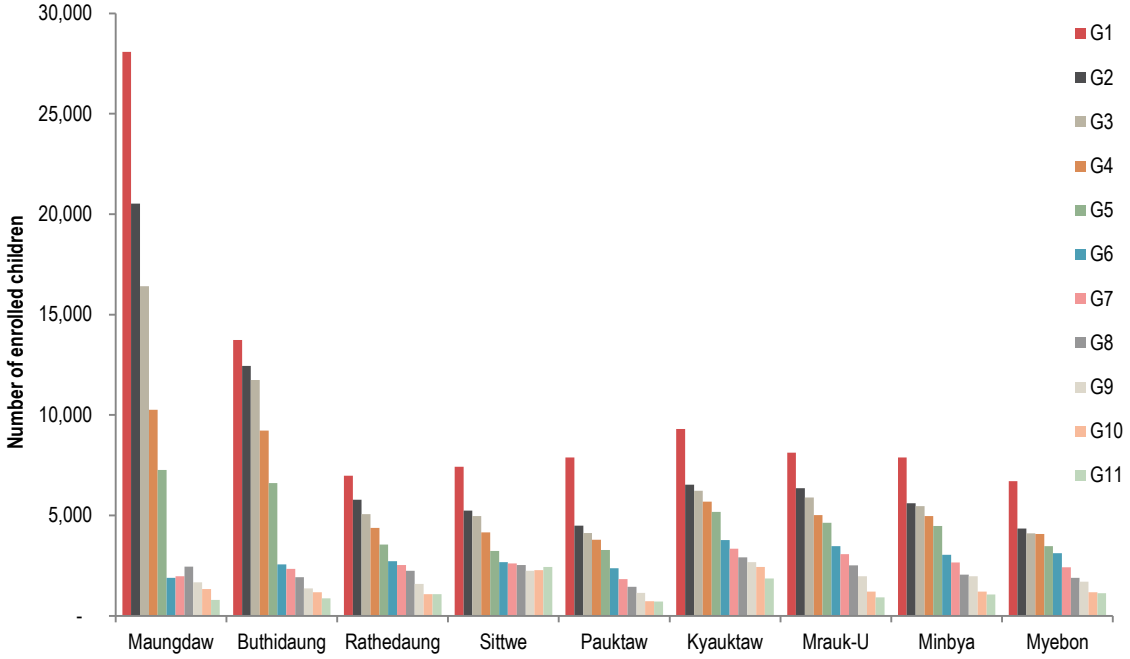
Data provided by TEOs included gender-disaggregated enrolment numbers for each grade as of August 2015 in each study township. These data should be viewed with a degree caution since they are limited by providing only a static snapshot of enrolment in each grade at a single point in time, rather than a picture of how age cohorts of children move through the system over the years. However, they can still be used to highlight general trends of how enrolment changes across grades. Figure 1 provides an overview of these data.

[58] Only schools with a functioning grade 9 are considered "middle" schools (as opposed to post-primary schools, which can run partial middle school education up to grade 8).
[59] CDNH – Rakhine State Needs Assessment.

At the primary level, the most obvious trend is the stark drop in enrolment numbers between grades 1 and 2 across all townships. This trend may be partially accounted for by high numbers of children repeating grade 1. However, recent analysis conducted by the Asian Development Bank suggests that high repetition rates notwithstanding, much of national-level primary school dropout still does appear to occur before grade 2.[60] This trend is also likely to be linked with a lack of school readiness due to a shortage of early childhood care and development (ECCD) opportunities, where Rakhine again ranks bottom of the country in terms of ECCD attendance according to MICS data (see Table 2 above).

Across the data, calculating the size of different grades yields a rough proxy for survival rates and transition rates. For transition across primary school, the size of grade 5 is just over half of grade 1 across all townships except Maungdaw, where it is only one-quarter of the size. For transition from primary to middle school, grade 6 is approximately one-third to one-quarter of the size of grade 5 in Maungdaw/Buthidaung, compared to around three-quarters in other study townships. By comparison, implied transition from middle school to high school is more complex, with grade 10 around four-fifths of the size of grade 9 in Maungdaw/Buthidaung, Sittwe and Kyauktaw, and around three-fifths of the size in the remaining townships. Overall, these figures suggest that the majority of attrition from government schools in study townships happens before children graduate from primary school, and that survival during primary school and transition from primary to middle school is especially poor in Maungdaw/Buthidaung relative to other townships.

Figure 1: Number of children enrolled in basic education/branch schools in study townships, by grade[61]



The data also allow for a calculation of GPIs for primary, middle and secondary school at the township level. Overall, Maungdaw performs poorly relative to other townships, with 0.75 girls for every boy at primary level, and only 0.25 at middle and high school level. Buthidaung also performs poorly at middle and high school level at 0.43 girls per boy (see Table 6 below). Sittwe and Rathedaung also perform relatively poorly for GPI at primary level, while other study townships are all well over 0.9 in both cases—consistent with both other townships in Rakhine and national-level figures. Across all study townships, as well as in Rakhine more broadly, there appears to be a broad trend of a drop in GPI at middle school

[60] For a detailed analysis, see Asian Development Bank – Republic of the Union of Myanmar: Support for Education Sector Planning, Technical Annex on the Secondary Education Subsector (Manilla, 2013), p. 57.
[61] Source: TEO school enrolment databases, August 2015

compared to primary school level, followed by an increase in GPI at high school level compared to middle level.

Table 6: Gender parity index in study townships, by school level[62]

	Primary schools	Middle schools	High schools
Maungdaw	0.73	0.25	0.25
Buthidaung	1.01	0.43	0.43
Rathedaung	0.88	0.88	0.96
Sittwe	0.84	0.84	1.00
Pauktaw	0.97	0.90	1.02
Kyauktaw	0.97	0.93	1.01
Mrauk-U	0.96	0.88	0.82
Minbya	0.97	0.93	0.88
Myebon	0.98	0.95	1.09

Education quality in study townships

Available secondary data on education quality in the study townships largely concerns issues of teacher presence and availability. According to government data, the proportion of enrolled students to assigned government teachers at primary level is lowest in Sittwe, then around 40:1 for other study townships, and substantially worse in Maungdaw and Buthidaung, exceeding 100:1 in the case of Maungdaw. Middle school and high school ratios are by contrast broadly similar across all townships (see Table 7). It should be noted however that these numbers do not include volunteers or community-paid teachers, or temporary daily-wage teaching staff recruited by TEOs to fill gaps.

Table 7: Students per teacher in study townships, by school level[63]

	Primary schools	Middle schools	High schools
Maungdaw	122.5	39.6	18.5
Buthidaung	82.9	33.6	22.8
Rathedaung	43.1	40.2	22.2
Sittwe	26.0	22.1	22.9
Pauktaw	42.4	37.2	18.7
Kyauktaw	39.0	40.4	28.5
Mrauk-U	33.5	44.2	21.0
Minbya	43.8	40.7	20.8
Myebon	47.8	47.9	22.1

According to a 2015 UNDP study focusing on 8 village tracts/wards in Rathedaung, Kyauktaw, Thandwe and Gwa townships, school administrators generally believe that teacher numbers have improved in recent years. However, administrators also highlighted teacher shortages as a major problem, with 73% of 33 staff interviewed highlighting this as a priority in order to improve the quality of education delivered. While the study reports that TEOs now have more flexibility to hire local, temporary teachers on a daily wage basis to bolster numbers, the fact that this remains a frequent practice indicates the extent of the

[62] Ibid.
[63] Source: MoE Rakhine State Education Data 2013-14 academic year

gap between teacher supply in demand.[64] This is likely linked at least in part to limited available teacher training opportunities—Rakhine currently has only one Education College located in Kyaukpyu, around a day or more journey from northern parts of the state.[65]

These raw numbers do not take into account issues of staff attendance or performance, neither of which are assessed by current government monitoring mechanisms.[66] Especially in remote or conflict-affected areas, staff attendance rates are reportedly low due to security fears and dissatisfaction with low salaries.[67] According to the CDNH Rakhine State Needs Assessment of respondents across all communities, only 56% reported that they have adequate access to teachers (these figures are especially low in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U townships, at 19% and 25% respectively).[68] In Muslim communities, many study participants reported that they were having to pay for volunteer teachers to staff government schools since officially-appointed government teachers simply did not turn up regularly, effectively creating a "parallel education system" in these areas. Parents also reported an acute awareness that the quality of education provided in these arrangements is poor, since community-hired teachers may have limited educational qualifications themselves and often do not speak Myanmar. The study's key informants also reported that people in Chin villages are also likely to be particularly badly affected by poor teacher attendance, since they tend to live in more remote areas relative to other parts of the population.[69]

In terms of teacher performance, the problem of extra tuition appears to be common in Rakhine as with the rest of the country—around half of UNDP respondents reported that teachers were conducting extra tuition after school hours to generate extra income. However, respondents in the study were nevertheless generally happy with teacher performance, with over three quarters reporting that teachers were polite and friendly to children and treated all children equally. This contrasts with anecdotal reports of discrimination against Muslim students by Rakhine and Burman teachers, most notably in the immediate run-up to the first outbreak of inter-communal violence in 2012.[70]

Beyond issues related to teaching staff, specific data on other issues related to education quality in Rakhine is sparse. In general, anecdotal evidence suggests that Rakhine faces issues at least as bad as those experienced by the education system in the rest of the country in terms of dilapidated buildings, over-crowded classrooms, inadequate WASH facilities or the absence of enough teaching and learning materials.[71]

Barriers to education in study townships

Evidence on barriers to accessing education in Rakhine indicate a similar range of factors to those affecting the rest of the country, further exacerbated in many cases by the presence of conflict dynamics. However, much of this evidence is either fragmented or anecdotal—especially on issues related to gender or disability—and little systematic work has been done to assess how these different factors inter-relate.

The most immediately apparent barrier to education in the study area remains the fallout of the current conflict: an estimated 60,000 children currently confined to IDP camps have minimal or non-existent access to the formal system, and receive limited support from the MoE (especially in terms of textbooks and school uniforms). In addition, movement restrictions preventing both children from accessing school and parents from generating the income to support education; increased pressure on government schools

[64] UNDP – Local Governance Mapping.
[65] For further details on teacher training processes in Myanmar see JICA – Data Collection Survey on Education, pp. 49-59.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps; CDNH – Rakhine State Needs Assessment.
[68] This contrasts with the finding in the UNDP study that 73% of parents surveyed felt that teachers kept regular working hours. However, given its small coverage area and sample size this figure is likely to be less indicative than the CDNH data.
[69] CDNH – Rakhine State Needs Assessment.
[70] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps.
[71] Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Strategic Plan; Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps; UNDP – Local Governance Mapping.

in communities hosting IDPs; and the decline in the scope and quality of government education provision in conflict-affected areas are all likely to limit many families' capacity and willingness to access the formal education system.

Based on the data presented in this section, the geographic distribution of resources is also appears to be a critical issue affecting access across different townships and areas. In Maungdaw/Buthidaung, it is possible that the apparent rapid rate of attrition of children across grades 1-5 is linked at least in part to a heavily under-resourced education system characterised by weak school coverage and spiralling teacher-student ratios. By contrast, the disproportionate size of middle and high school attendance in Sittwe is potentially linked with its central status as the state capital. In general, existing studies also appear to indicate a link between remoteness and both poor school coverage and weak teacher attendance.[72] At the state level, 2009/10 IHLCS data also indicate that the rural/urban divide is especially important in this respect, with primary enrolment rates at 89% in urban areas compared to 69% in rural areas, dropping to 61% and 26% respectively for secondary education.

As demonstrated by the GPI figures presented above, gender is also clearly a factor in education access in Muslim areas, especially in the case of teenage girls. This may be linked with traditional social norms constraining girls' access to education after puberty. However, evidence from camp-based assessments also indicates that the erosion or re-negotiation of social norms in the aftermath of the conflict may have contributed to a further tightening of these constraints after 2012.[73] Disability status is also likely an important factor limiting access for children with disabilities (CWDs)—in general there are minimal facilities or programmes in Rakhine available for supporting CWDs,[74] while poor transport infrastructure also reportedly limits the ability of children with physical disabilities to attend school.[75]

More broadly, poverty clearly plays a major role in affecting access to education as it does with the rest of the country, especially at middle and secondary level where associated costs are much higher. According to 2009/10 IHCLS data, primary enrolment rates for poor households in Rakhine were 63.7% compared to 78.3% in non-poor households, while at secondary level they were 13.8% compared to 45.9%. Significantly, these gaps are more extreme in both cases than at the national level (see above).

Education outside the government curriculum

A variety of educational institutions exist in Rakhine which are entirely beyond the remit of the government education system. In remote areas, communities may set up self-help schools for younger children that function entirely without affiliation to the government system. Short-term Basic Literacy Education drives also attempt to provide both children and adults with basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic.[76] NGO-run adolescent spaces attempt to offer basic vocational training and life skills to youth unable to enter middle or high school. And churches in Christian areas regularly offer literacy and numeracy teaching to younger children in the areas they serve.

However, by far the most prominent institutions in terms of presence in the study area are community-funded mosque schools or madrasahs in Muslim areas. These are geared almost exclusively toward providing a religious education to younger children of both genders, though some also extend services to mainly (but not exclusively) male adolescents. Generally, lessons focus on memorising and interpreting

[72] UNDP – Local Governance Mapping; CDNH – Rakhine State Needs Assessment; Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Strategic Plan.
[73] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps. Similar trends of increasing constraints on girls' freedom of movement have been observed in other conflict settings. See for example Deniz Kandiyoti – The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2005).
[74] UNDP – Local Governance Mapping.
[75] Save the Children – Confronting Obstacles of Intrusion.
[76] This activity emerged from mass drives to achieve literacy in the 70s, and involves government teachers volunteering their time during the summer to teach basic reading, writing and arithmetic (or the 3Rs). By 2012, almost a quarter of a million people in Rakhine had taken part in such programmes. However, only 55% of participants were formally recognized as literate by the programme. See JICA – Data Collection Survey on Education, p. 81.

religious texts and not on literacy or numeracy. As a result of a schism in the 1930s over approaches to translation of religious texts, madrasahs in Rakhine as well as lower Myanmar teach texts in the original Arabic, and Myanmar is rarely if ever the language of instruction. By comparison, similar institutions in upper Myanmar generally translate all texts into Myanmar and teach in that language.[77]

Madrasahs generally function in parallel with the government education system rather than in competition with it. Classes tend to run for two hours a day and are often timed in order to avoid clashes with government timetables. Assessments in camp settings report that Muslim parents see madrasahs as an important and valuable institution, but do not generally expect them to provide basic education, or see them as a preferable alternative to the formal education system.[78] However, for some children madrasahs nevertheless represent the only engagement with any kind of education at all in areas where government schools do not exist, or when parents are too poor to afford costs associated with government education.

Madrasahs have been subject to accusations of preaching extremist messages both in Rakhine and Myanmar more widely,[79] with several reportedly shut down by the government in Maungdaw after 2012 due to security concerns.[80] However, assessments to date, albeit limited in scope, have found no evidence of radical messages being delivered through madrasahs, and only limited evidence of their playing an especially influential role in shaping the politics or perceptions of communities in general.[81]

[77] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps.
[78] Ibid; Save the Children – Conflict Sensitivity Review.
[79] See for example Aung Kyaw Min, "Muslim leaders forced to halt prayers at school," Myanmar Times, 21 October 2015.
[80] Assessment team observations, Maungdaw, October 2015.
[81] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps

4. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study's primary data collection phase. First, it outlines the results of the education systems mapping exercise at the village tract level, focusing on school access and the presence of different types of learning space. It then goes on to present data related to education quality at the learning space level, before finally discussing key issues related to access to education.

Education systems at the village tract level

This sub-section presents data on children's overall attendance of learning spaces across areas with good and poor levels of school coverage, before analysing data on the types and relative importance of different learning spaces assessed.

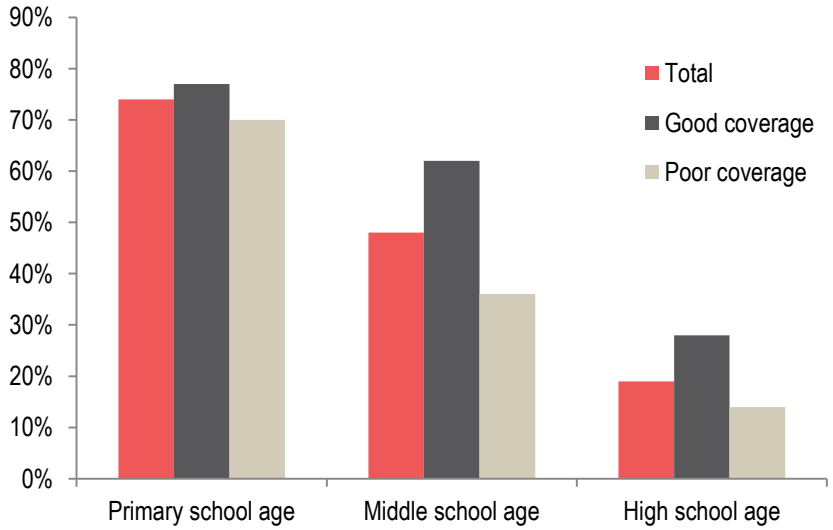
Demographics

In total, the assessment visited 9 VTs with "good" school coverage and 10 VTs with "poor" school coverage (including two VTs assessed together in Sittwe due to the smaller size of VTs there). These VTs included a total of 116 villages, made up of 66 Buddhist villages, 43 Muslim villages, and 7 Christian villages. The average number of villages in VTs with good coverage was 5.3, compared to 7.3 in VTs with poor coverage. Average populations of school-age children were also slightly smaller in good-coverage VTs versus poor-coverage VTs, at 1,125 compared to 1,239 at primary level, 557 compared to 717 at middle level, and 372 compared to 584 at high school level.

Participation in education

At the village level, groups of key informants including village administrators, other community leaders and volunteer teachers were asked to estimate how many children in their village were attending learning spaces of any kind at primary, middle and high school ages. These numbers were then aggregated up to provide a snapshot of attendance rates at VT level.

Figure 2: Proportion (%) of children estimated to attend learning spaces in VTs, by age group and coverage

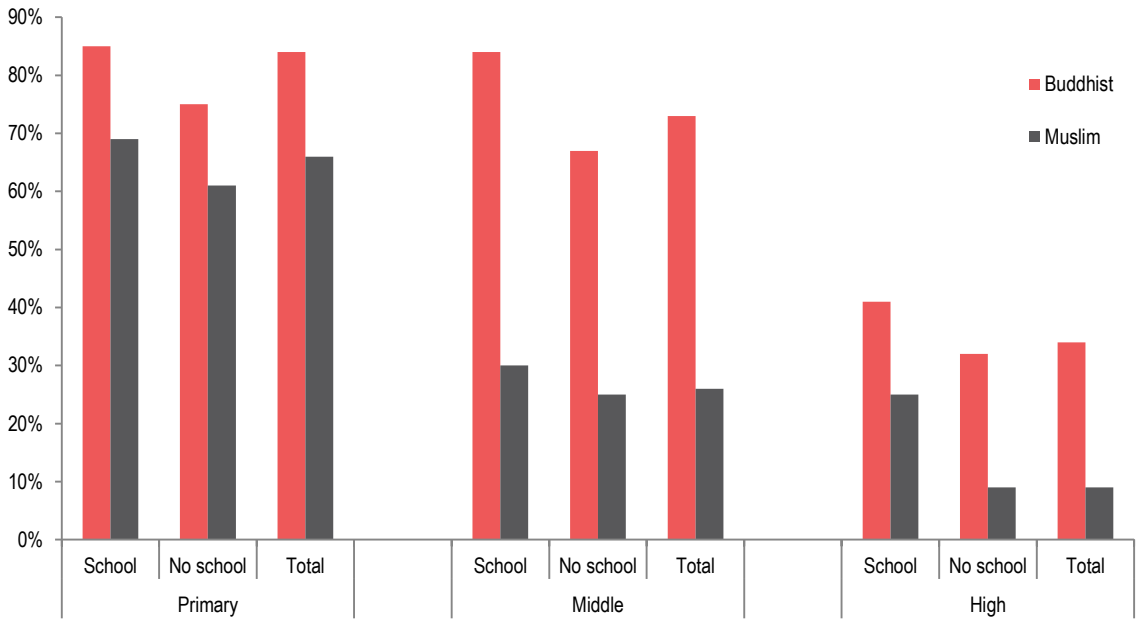


Across all assessed VTs, the total proportion of children attending learning spaces was 74% for primary school age children, 48% for middle-school age children, and 19% for high school age children (see Figure 2 above)—figures that fall broadly in line with MICS and IHLCS household survey data for the state. In

the majority of cases at all school levels, these proportions were higher in VTs with good school coverage compared to VTs with weak school coverage. At the primary school level, attendance in good VTs averaged 77%, ranging from 66% in Maungdaw to close to 100% in Rathedaung. In poor VTs, it averaged 70%, ranging from 48% in Maungdaw to 91% in Kyauktaw. At middle school level, attendance in good VTs averaged 62%, ranging from 45% in Buthidaung to 83% in Kyauktaw. In poor VTs, it averaged 36%, ranging from 9% in Maungdaw to 78% in Mrauk-U. At high school level, attendance in good VTs averaged 28%, ranging from 10% in Pauktaw to 67% in Myebon. In poor VTs, it averaged 14%, ranging from 5% in Maungdaw to 54% in Mrauk-U.

These differences become more marked when analysed at the level of the individual village. The proportion of primary school-age children attending school in the 83 villages with a curriculum primary school (basic education, branch, affiliated, or monastic) was 78% compared to 63% in the 33 villages without one. For the 25 villages with a curriculum middle or post-primary school, the proportion of middle-school age children attending learning spaces was 72% versus 40% in the 91 villages without one. And for the 6 villages with a government high school, the proportion of high-school age children attending was 40% compared to 18% in the 110 villages without a high school. Overall, the relative proportion of children attending school at all levels was significantly higher in Buddhist than in Muslim communities, regardless of the presence of a school (see Figure 3).[82] Note that figures here for high-school level are drawn from a small sample of villages and should therefore be viewed with caution.

Figure 4: Proportion (%) of children of school age estimated to attend learning spaces in Buddhist and Muslim villages, by presence/absence of curriculum schools at different age group



In terms of gender, the main differences observed were according to the religion of different communities rather than the presence/absence of schools. In Buddhist communities, slightly more girls than boys were reported attending learning spaces at all levels, with GPIs at 1.08 for primary school age children, 1.12 for middle school age children, and 1.12 for high school age children. In Muslim communities, more boys than girls attend at all levels, but much more so at middle and high school levels with GPIs at 0.91 for primary school age children, 0.57 for middle school age children and 0.35 for high school age children.

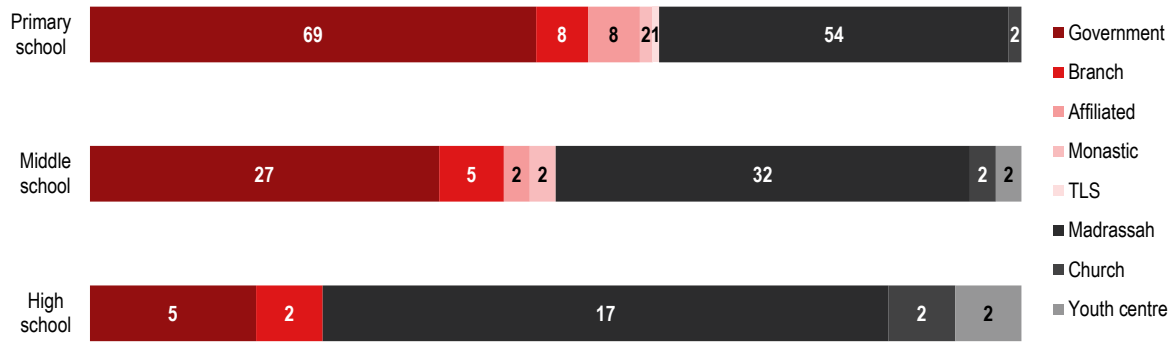
[82] Christian communities have not been included in this comparison due to the small number of villages sampled. However, in these villages attendance was generally in line with if not higher than for Buddhist communities.

In summary, the presence/absence of a school in the village shows a clear relationship with children's participation in learning spaces. However, it is clearly not the only causal factor given the numbers of out of school children even in villages hosting a school that serves their age bracket (most notably at high school level). In addition, higher proportions of children in assessed Buddhist villages were reported as attending schools at all levels compared to children in Muslim villages. Furthermore, a slightly smaller number of boys in assessed Buddhist villages were attending learning spaces than girls at all levels, while in Muslim village the reverse is true, especially at middle and high school level. Further analysis on children's ability to access learning spaces can be found in the below discussion of FGD results.

Types of learning space

In total, the study assessed 148 learning spaces. Of these, 89 (60%) were teaching the government curriculum. These included 77 government-run schools, of which 45 were primary schools (including 3 branch schools); 13 were post-primary schools, 12 were middle schools (including 4 branch schools); and 7 were high schools (including 2 branch schools). In addition, they included 9 affiliated schools (all at primary level), 2 monastic schools (post-primary), and one TLS (primary). Outside the government curriculum, the study assessed 55 madrasahs (of which 23 taught children of primary school age, 8 taught up to post-primary age, 7 taught up to middle school age, and 17 taught up to high school age), 2 church schools teaching up to high school age, and 2 NGO-run youth centres teaching children of middle and high school ages only.

Figure 5: Number and types of assessed learning space, by school level

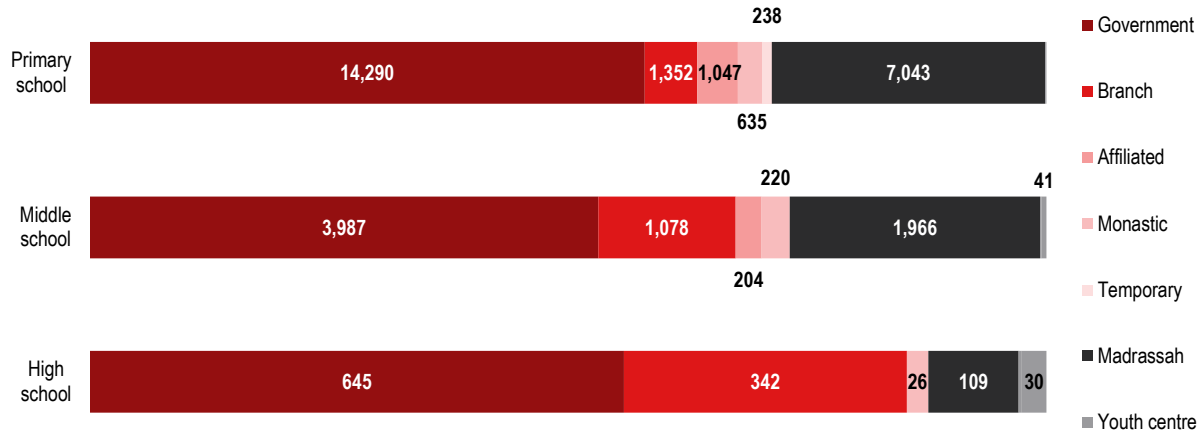


Red denotes spaces teaching government curriculum, grey denotes spaces outside government curriculum

Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the number and types of assessed learning space offering education to children of different age groups. Note that some learning spaces are counted twice across different age groups, since spaces catering to high and middle school-age children also cater to children down to primary school age in almost all cases. Two trends emerge from this data – first, that proportion of spaces offering some kind of learning experience outside of the government curriculum increases relative to curriculum schools at middle and high school level; and second, that these are overwhelmingly in the form of religious schools in Muslim and Christian communities, with few similar institutions existing in Buddhist areas.

In terms of enrolment across learning spaces, the majority of children are enrolled in government schools at all levels. Figure 6 gives a breakdown of the number of children enrolled in each space type at primary, middle and high school level. Given that madrasahs in most case operate in parallel with the government system, with many children attending religious classes before or after attending school elsewhere, enrolment figures are presented as absolute numbers rather than percentages.

Figure 6: Numbers of children enrolled in different assessed learning space types, by school level



Red denotes spaces teaching government curriculum; grey denotes spaces outside the government curriculum

In general, these figures demonstrate that while government curriculum schools are slightly less common than madrasahs, they are accessed by more children overall due at least in part to their larger size, especially at high school level. This pattern holds generally true across VTs with both good and poor school coverage. Within the government curriculum, they also demonstrate the primacy of government schools at primary level on the one hand, and the increasing importance of branch schools at the middle and high school level: 81% of children enrolled at primary school level in assessed schools teaching the government curriculum were taught within government schools, compared to 8% in branch schools, 6% in affiliated schools, 4% in monastic schools, and 1% in TLS. At middle level, 73% were in government schools, 20% were in branch schools, 4% were in affiliated schools and 4% were in monastic schools. At high school level, 64% were in government schools, 34% in branch schools and 3% were in monastic schools.

FGD participants generally contrasted basic education schools as less favourable than other learning spaces, wherever alternatives were available. Parents in Mrauk-U generally felt that the monastic school in their area was better resourced (being funded by a foreign faith-based organisation). They were also sympathetic to its perceived commitment to providing free, high-quality education to poor children against a context of generally declining standards in government schools in recent decades. In Minbya, participants recognised that teachers in basic education schools were better qualified, but felt that local church schools and an NGO-run TLS provided a better standard of tuition. In contrast, parents running affiliated schools in villages where basic education schools did not exist were strongly aware of the limitations of community-funded education, highlighting the gap in both facilities and in staffing between their spaces and in basic education schools nearby.

Critically, however, the main focus in all communities was either for inclusion within the formal system, or a better standard of education within it. In this respect, parents in Muslim areas made it clear that madrasahs were not expected to provide any education except religious instruction, and had been timetabled specifically so that teaching hours did not clash with school opening hours.

Quality of the learning environment within schools

This sub-section presents data on the quality of the learning environment in assessed schools. It looks first at issues of inclusion, related to vulnerable groups present in schools; special measures taken to keep students in school; and the provision of learning in children's mother tongues. It then examines indicators related to teaching and learning, including access to learning materials; teacher numbers;

teacher qualifications; teacher attendance; and teacher payment. Finally, it examines issues related to school infrastructure, including the quality of school buildings and performance on key WASH indicators.

For indicators in this section, overall data are presented by space type rather than broken down by age group, on the basis that almost all spaces serving students of older age groups also serve those form younger age groups. In addition, data on monastic, TLS/youth spaces and church schools have been excluded on the grounds that the sample size for each space type is too small to draw reliable comparisons.[83] In addition, basic education and branch schools have been grouped together on the basis that the lines between these two categories are often blurred – in the case of middle and high schools assessed, a branch year or years were grafted onto full basic education schools hosting lower grades. In addition, in several areas visited by the assessment team, certain schools had recently been upgraded from branch to full basic education status, without any qualitative change in terms of the school's infrastructure and resources.

Inclusion

Learning space administrators were asked whether their spaces offered services to a set of vulnerable groups. Close to half of all basic education/branch and affiliated schools (47% and 49%) reported hosting children with disabilities (CWDs) compared to one-fifth of affiliated schools.[84] In general, schools did not provide any special support for such students beyond placing them at the front of the class so that they could see and listen more clearly. Orphans were also hosted by 34% of basic education/branch schools, 22% of affiliated schools and 40% of madrasahs. Affiliated schools hosted the highest number of over-age children for their school level (33%), followed by 19% of basic education/branch schools and 7% of madrasahs. No schools reported hosting any pregnant girls or young mothers.

Administrators were also asked whether their spaces provided any specific kinds of support to encourage vulnerable or poorer children to stay in school. In general very few spaces made any kinds of efforts in this regard. The most commonly reported practices were accelerated learning for older students (in 9% of basic education/branch schools, 11% of affiliated schools and 7% of madrasahs); drop-out monitoring (in 9% of basic education/branch schools, 11% of affiliated schools and 4% of madrasahs); and scholarships (in 5% of basic education/branch schools, 11% of affiliated schools and 15% of madrasahs). Government schools also offered school uniforms for girls (18%), child protection monitoring (8%) and early childhood development services (3%).

In terms of the inclusion of minority languages, 42% of basic education/branch schools and 22% of affiliated schools were attended by children speaking more than one mother tongue language. Overall, the sole language of instruction in government schools was Myanmar (although in practice teachers generally engage with students in Rakhine), followed by Muslim,[85] Chin, Myo, Daing Nak and Marmaragyi (all Madrasahs hosted exclusively Muslim-speaking students). At affiliated schools, Muslim was spoken as the main languages in just over half of spaces, followed by Rakhine, Myo and Daing Nak. All learning spaces hosting Rakhine and Muslim students reported that at least some teaching staff were able to speak the relevant dialect. However, mother-tongue language support was not available in one-third of the 18 schools hosting Chin speakers, in one of the 3 schools hosting Daing Nak speakers, and in none of the 7 schools hosting Myo speakers or 2 hosting Marmaragyi speakers.

[83] Burnet/MEDG – Monastic Schools in Myanmar provides a comprehensive overview of the monastic system in Myanmar, covering many of the indicators contained within this study. Data on TLSs and youth centres is available in regular EiE 3Ws reports available at http://www.themimu.info/sector/education (accessed 21 October 2015).
[84] Without any nationally agreed standards on disabilities, this likely represents an underestimate since some disabilities are likely being under-reported.
[85] The language spoken by the majority of Muslim communities in Rakhine is referred to by several terms, all of which are currently contested. For ease of reference, it is referred to in this report simply as "Muslim."

FGD participants did not highlight language as an especially important issue affecting education quality. However, in Muslim areas this appears to be linked to the fact that due to absenteeism among government teachers, so many teachers are hired locally—and therefore fluent in local languages. In both Maungdaw and Buthidaung, parents simultaneously requested more government-hired teachers in their schools, while emphasising the need for them to be fluent in both Myanmar and Muslim languages, like existing community teachers.

Teaching and learning

Contact time

All government and affiliated schools reported opening five days per week, while many madrasahs also opened on weekends. Basic education/branch schools reported opening an average of 6.2 hours per day, compared to 5.8 for affiliated schools. For contact hours spent actually teaching students, basic education/branch schools reported 5.3 hours per day, almost three quarters of an hour longer than the 4.6 hours per day for affiliated schools. For all school types, it should be noted that these averages likely over-state the true number of contact hours per child, since some schools operate in shifts, which are according to FGD participants usually implemented to deal with over-crowding. In Kyauktaw, Maungdaw and Myebon FGDs, participants reported that since their schools served children several villages, they had to run morning and afternoon classes for different grades in order to accommodate everyone. This problem appeared especially acute in Kyauktaw, where the local school was the only accessible branch middle school for a large number of communities. In total, 17% of basic education/branch schools reported running multiple shifts (no shifts were reported for affiliated schools). These seem to take place on an ad-hoc basis rather than occurring systematically across the basic education system. A further issue in this respect is the regularly reported tendency of teachers covering multiple grades. According to student FGD participants, this could sometimes result in classes technically being in session, but in practice left unsupervised. Further research is needed to assess the impact of both of these trends on actual student contact hours.

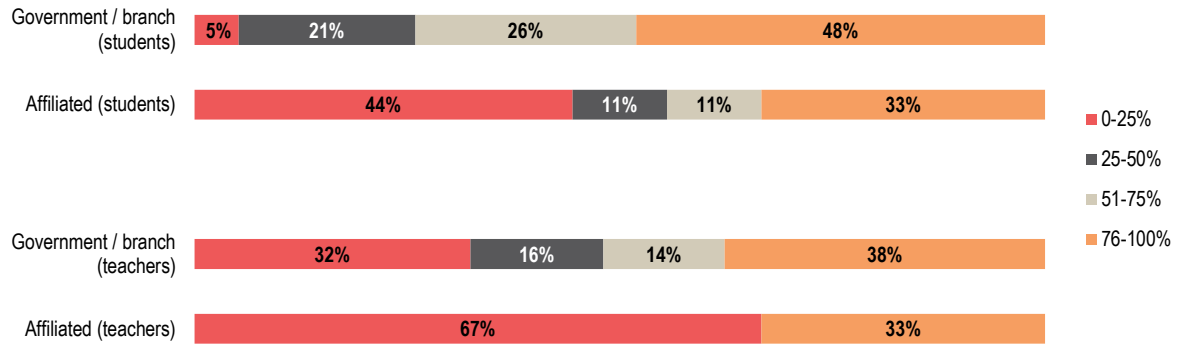
According to administrator estimates, around 88% of children attended school at least 4 days/week in basic education/branch schools, with this figure at around 85% in branch schools and 81% in madrasahs. In order to triangulate these estimates, the assessment team also compared enrolment at learning spaces with the actual number of children present on the day of the assessment. Attendance as a proportion of enrolment in basic education/branch schools was 90%—slightly lower at primary level and slightly higher at middle/high school level—compared to 82% for affiliated schools.[86]

Learning materials

To examine access to learning materials, school administrators were asked roughly what proportion of students and teachers had access to a full set of textbooks, followed up by direct observation of learning environments by assessment team (see Figure 7 below). Overall, students appear better equipped than teachers (with little variation in numbers across primary/middle/secondary level) with government schools better equipped than affiliated schools. Almost three-quarters (74%) of basic education/branch learning spaces report at least half of students having access to a full set of textbooks, compared to less than half (44%) in affiliated spaces. By contrast, 52% of government schools report at least half of teachers having access to a full set, compared to only 33% for affiliated schools.

[86] Similar data could not be collected for madrassahs since many teach shifts and therefore have different parts of their student body present at different times of the day.

Figure 7: Proportion (%) of teachers and students reported to be in possession of a full set of textbooks, by learning space type



Parents in FGDs across the majority of townships noted that textbook access had increased in the 2014/15 academic year since the government had started providing free textbooks as part of a bid to introduce free universal primary education. However, fathers in Minbya also noted that these "free" textbooks could in practice still incur costs:

> *"We heard the government has distributed the textbooks free to all schools. But we had to pay 200 MMK [0.15 USD] per child to the headmaster to get them. The headmaster told us that no transportation charge was provided by the government to bring those books to the school. So, we had to pay the costs of transportation. The ones who did not pay have not received the textbooks."*
>
> — Male parent, Minbya

Teaching staff

To assess teaching staffing strength, learning space administrators were asked to provide information on the numbers of teachers registered at the space, together with how many were present at the school on the day of the assessment. Basic education/branch schools had an average of 9.2 teachers (5.3 women and 3.9 men), affiliated schools had smaller staff and largely male staff members, with an average of 3.5 teachers (0.7 women and 2.8 men). Coupled with data on student enrolment, these produce student/teacher ratios of 29 for government schools, and 38 for affiliated schools. In basic education/branch schools, this low ratio for the secondary data above is accounted for by the presence of community-paid extra staff (see below). If only government-salaried[87] teachers are accounted for, average student/teacher ratios in basic education/branch schools rise to 39. These figures are also misleading in light of actual attendance – 29% of registered teachers were not present on the day of the assessment in basic education/branch schools, compared to 25% in affiliated schools. When these numbers were combined with student attendance on the day of assessment, student/teacher ratios jumped to 40 for government schools, although they dropped to 31 for affiliated schools due to high rates of student non-attendance.

The issue of teacher attendance in government schools is further complicated by the presence of community-supported volunteer teachers. Across all basic education/branch schools, government paid staff accounted for 81% of all teachers registered in basic education/branch schools, with women representing 66% of this group. Community-paid teachers or volunteers accounting for the remaining 19%, with men accounting for 80%.[88] However, non-government teachers were concentrated in only 32%

[87] The assessment did not distinguish between teachers contracted on a permanent basis by the government, and temporary staff paid by TEOs on a daily labour basis. It is therefore likely to have over-stated the presence of permanent government staff.
[88] All staff at affiliated schools were community-supported or volunteers.

of schools (around three-quarters of which were in Muslim, Myo/Kaman or Chin villages), where they make up 43% of the workforce. In the majority of government schools where Muslim is the main language of attending students, administrators reported that government staff rarely if ever showed up to teach, with communities paying volunteer teachers to replace them.[89]

Teacher numbers and teacher attendance were one of the main issues raised by both parents and students in FGDs. Weak teacher attendance was highlighted as a problem in half of all FGDs covering all townships except Minbya, Myebon and Pauktaw. In all remaining townships, inadequate staffing was highlighted as an issue even if teachers were perceived to be attending school regularly. However, parents in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U and Myebon did also note that government teacher attendance had started to improve in the past academic year due to recent increases in their salary.

In all three Muslim communities in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Sittwe covered by FGDs, parents reported that government teachers barely attended schools in their areas since the onset of violence in 2012, effectively leaving communities to fund staff in government schools themselves:

> *"There are government teachers being employed in the branch middle school. But parents from different villages in the village tract have to pay to employ community teachers in order to run the school due to long absence of government teachers from the school since communal violence in 2012. We have learned that the head teacher herself attends school twice a year—at the times of admission and final examination in the school."*
>
> — Female parent, Buthidaung

> *"The government school is free, but the teachers are absent for long time and they will attend the school once in a month or two. So, the people here have to hire volunteer teachers to teach in the school and we, villagers have to pay for teaching our children. If the school was totally free, there would be more children in the school."*
>
> — Female parent, Sittwe

These findings therefore appear to corroborate fears highlighted in the literature review of a "parallel education system" existing within the shell of government schools but funded by communities in remote or insecure areas—especially in Maungdaw/Buthidaung—where government teachers are either unable or unwilling to attend school regularly. However, poor rates of teacher attendance were also reported across the study area, even if the problem was not so acute or regular as to require communities to hire an entire cadre of replacement staff:

> *"We don't have enough teachers in our school—when one is taking a class, another adjacent class is quite noisy without teacher in it. When two or more teachers are absent, our school much looks like a monkey park with children running here and there making loud noises. This causes great disturbance to other classes as well. So, we would need to employ adequate teachers in our school."*
>
> — Male student, Kyauktaw

[89] Unfortunately the assessment did not disaggregate whether present and absent members of staff in government schools were government-paid or volunteers.

> *"There are six teachers employed by the government in this school. Only one or two teachers attend the school regularly. Sometimes there is no teacher at all in the school especially at the end of every month. Teachers' regular attendance in the school is very important for our children education. So, the government should look into the performance of its teachers in the rural schools like ours."*
>
> — Male student, Rathedaung

In several areas, the lack of teachers or inadequate attendance was linked by parents to poor student performance. In Kyauktaw and Pauktaw, parents noted that most if not all students in local government high schools had failed to matriculate from grade 10, while in Minbya, parents complained that their children could not read or write after three years at school as a result of this issue. A minority of parents and students across Kyauktaw, Rathedaung and especially Minbya asserted that without attending expensive after-hours tuition, it would not be possible for students to progress in school.

Teacher attitudes and performance at school were not as widely criticised. In contrast to frank criticism of school facilities (see below), the majority of students in FGDs were positive about their teachers, with only a small number complaining about poor treatment. Male parents in Minbya accused teachers of neglecting their duties in school to focus more on lucrative private tuition after hours, but this accusation was not reflected elsewhere.

In terms of teacher qualifications, 84% of teachers registered at basic education/branch schools had graduated from grade 10 or higher, compared to 68% in affiliated schools and not a single teacher in madrasahs. Within government schools, a gender disparity was observed between the number of qualified female teachers (91%) and the number of qualified male teachers (73%). Given the high proportion of male compared to female community-paid teachers at government schools, this may indicate a lower level of qualification among this group relative to government teachers.[90]

FGD participants in areas depending on volunteer teachers reported that these staff generally lacked adequate qualifications, and were acutely aware of the impact this would have on their children's education, as one male parent in Buthidaung explained:

> *"We have to depend on our community teachers who are not qualified to be a teacher because good and qualified teachers employed by the government have not attended our schools for a long time. The government should provide training to our community teachers so they can teach our children properly in the absence of its own teachers."*

In general, other FGD participants did not directly comment on teachers' formal qualifications. However, a minority parents and students across Kyauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U and Pauktaw sites felt that children were not receiving adequate instruction in mathematics and English in particular, and requested better teachers from the government to support in these subjects.

Learning environment

School/classroom infrastructure

Learning spaces occupied a wide variety of different structures (see Images 1 and 2 for comparison). For government schools, approximately 55% occupied structures made of permanent building materials of wood, concrete or brick. Meanwhile, 32% occupied structures made of semi-permanent materials palm or bamboo, while a further 13% occupied temporary structures such as other buildings, temporary covered spaces or the open air. For affiliated schools, a smaller proportion occupied permanent structures (11%)

[90] As above, the assessment did not disaggregate qualifications between government-paid staff and community-supported staff.

while more occupied semi-permanent (44%) and temporary (44%) spaces. For madrasahs, these figures were 31%, 45% and 24% respectively.

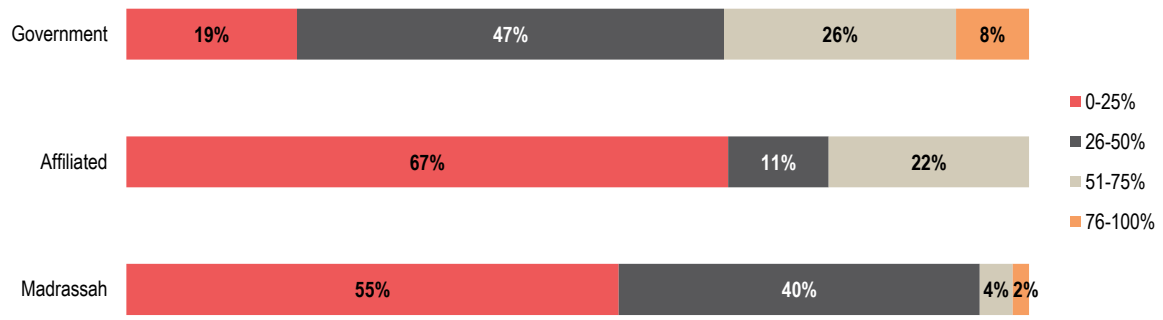
A striking number of government schools (45%) reported some kind of damage rendering classrooms dangerous or inaccessible, though it should be noted that damages varied quite widely from broken windows or gaps in flooring to more serious structural problems. This figure was lower in affiliated schools (22%) and madrasahs (35%). In the context of these numbers, 21% of village-level key informants felt that children were not safe at school due to the risk posed by old or unsafe infrastructure. Overall, these numbers are likely to have been skewed upwards by wind and flood damage from Cyclone Komen, which hit Rakhine two months prior to the assessment. However, as the images below suggest, many buildings were already in a severely degraded state prior to any cyclone damage. Very few schools had taken any measures to prepare for similar natural disasters: only 4% of basic education/branch schools and madrasahs reported taking any measures to strengthen structures to withstand strong winds and rain, while only 5% of basic education/branch schools and 7% of madrasahs reported having any kind of emergency planning in the event of a disaster (affiliated schools had made no preparations in terms of either structure or planning).

Image 1: BEPS in Pauktaw township

Image 2: BEPS in Sittwe township

Reflecting a common theme in the literature review, class sizes in assessed schools were large, with several grades often packed into one large, open room. The average number of children observed in each classroom by the assessment team was 85 for government schools, 37 for affiliated schools and 113 for madrasahs. In terms of classroom facilities, under 50% of all learning space types reported that at least half of their classrooms were equipped with adequate furniture (see Figure 8 below). In one of the primary schools assessed, children were even observed bringing their own furniture with them to school.

Figure 8: Proportion (%) of classrooms equipped with adequate furniture, by learning space type



Along with teacher numbers, criticism of school infrastructure was common across FGD participants, emerging as an issue in over three-quarters of groups and spread across all townships. The following examples are indicative of the general trend of problems raised:

"The primary school is just a four-wall building with the iron-sheet roof on the ground. The ceiling and flooring should be made and the broken windows and doors should be repaired in the school. On bright sunny day it is too hot to stay and on heavily raining day the ground is too wet and slippery for our children in the school. There is also no fence around the compound of the school and cannot prevent intrusion of animals like dogs and goats into the school."

— Female parent, Pauktaw

"We always like wearing white and green [school clothes]. We feel quite proud of ourselves in those colours. We always want to be a student...[But] we feel really sorry to talk about conditions of our schools here. We never want our schools in these terrible conditions. Our school buildings are not so good—quite small and over-crowded. There are no adequate facilities such as separate classrooms, no clean latrines, not enough furniture and not enough teachers."

— Female student, Myebon

"There are three buildings in this [branch high] school—two buildings are small permanent structures while the rest one is big but unfinished semi-permanent structure being covered by plastic sheets as walls and no separate classroom. This building has no window and door and no flooring, leakages on the roof as well. On heavy raining days, the children who are seated in that building are sent back home due to leakages and sprinkle of rainwater. There is no fence around the school compound, no well or tank for water and no adequate and clean latrines as well."

— Male parent, Pauktaw

Issues specifically related to overcrowding were reported in just under half of all FGDs across all townships except Rathedaung and Mrauk-U. Students regularly reported that being crowded into single rooms containing multiple grades left them without space to work properly, while the noise left them struggling to hear their teachers. Parents in Pauktaw also reported that after the cyclone, their already crowded storm-damaged school was being re-built on a smaller footprint, further contributing to the problem.

WASH infrastructure

All learning spaces were seen to perform poorly across a range of WASH indicators (see Table 7 for a full summary). Only one-third of basic education/branch and affiliated schools had access to a safe drinking water source year-round, compared to 48% nationwide. In terms of latrine access, 74% of government schools, 33% of affiliated schools and 65% of madrasahs have access to any kind of sanitation (compared to an average of 68% nationwide). Where latrines exist, average number of students per latrine was 102 in basic education/branch schools, 201 in affiliated schools, and 126 in madrasahs (compared to an average of 69 nationwide).[91] Only 32% of basic education/branch schools offered toilets segregated by gender, with almost no latrines accessible to CWDs. Only 35% of basic education/branch schools offered handwashing facilities, compared to 11% in affiliated schools and 20% in madrasahs. Worryingly, evidence open defecation was also observed at 22% of government schools and 11% of madrasahs.

[91] Nationwide figures derived from an unpublished UNICEF WASH in schools baseline conducted in 2011. Results cited in WASH in Schools - Myanmar (accessed 21 October 2015) and an untitled presentation to the Rakhine WASH cluster (accessed 21 October 2015).

Table 7: Proportion (%) of learning spaces achieving key WASH indicators, by learning space type

	Year round source of water	Latrine facilities present	Average students per latrine	Gender-segregated latrines	Student / teacher segregated latrines	Latrines accessible for CWDs	Hand-washing facilities available	Evidence of open defecation
Government	31%	74%	102	32%	38%	1%	35%	22%
Affiliated	33%	33%	201	0%	22%	0%	11%	0%
Madrasah	49%	63%	126	5%	9%	2%	20%	11%

There are currently no clear government standards established for WASH in schools in Myanmar. However, the MoE and UNICEF are currently piloting a "Three Star Approach" rating system for WASH infrastructure and practices in schools.[92] According to this system, a school must meet three criteria in order to qualify as at least a "one-star" school:

1. All children participate in daily group hand-washing with soap sessions, ideally before the school meal.
2. The school has basic gender-segregated toilets that are functional, clean and used by all children (no open defecation).
3. Every child has, and correctly uses, a personal drinking water bottle.

While the assessment did not measure possession of drinking water bottles, results indicate that based on indicators 1 and 2 alone, only 17% of basic education/branch schools would qualify for one-star status, compared with 0% of affiliated schools and 4% of madrasahs.

FGD participants raised WASH infrastructure as a specific problem in around 40% of FGDs across all townships except Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung. In general these issues centred around the lack of clean drinking water and a lack of adequate or clean latrines (by contrast, in Maungdaw FGD participants praised the brand-new latrines they had received as a donation from an NGO, while at the same time worrying that their dilapidated school might collapse next rainy season). One complaint raised by both children and parents was the question of who was responsible for WASH infrastructure maintenance. According to participants, this should in theory be the job of school guards. However, in just over half of FGD sites students reported that they were generally responsible for fetching water and cleaning out latrines, either because there was no guard, or because they were not doing their job.

Looking ahead

In one of the secondary assessments reviewed, local key informants were reported to believe that Rakhine's education system had been deliberately starved of government funding over the decades, a position echoed by several members of the assessment team over the course of this study.[93] In criticising the weaknesses of the schools they use, FGD participants likewise framed the issue as due to years of neglect. However, around half of parents also expressed cautious optimism for the future based on observed improvements in teacher attendance, better provision of free textbooks and other education materials, and the provision of free universal primary education for the first time starting in the 2014/15 academic year. As one mother in Mrauk-U explained:

[92] See UNICEF/GiZ – Field Guide: The Three Star Approach for WASH in Schools (New York, NY, 2013) (accessed 21 October 2015).
[93] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps, pp. 30-31.

> *"Schools in our area have been in an abysmal situation for years. They have been schools only in name—no facilities, not enough teachers in the classroom, almost nothing. Now the government has increased the teachers' salary and initiated free primary education, the schools here seem to be coming back to life again."*

Notably, this sense of optimism was not shared by parents struggling with chronically under-staffed schools in the Muslim FGD communities in Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Sittwe. However, one point common across all FGD participants from all communities was that the government education system remained the focus of people's aspirations for their children, and that the government (as opposed to NGOs, the UN, community-based organisations or religious groups) remained almost the sole focus of demands or hopes for improvements. As one father in Buthidaung explained when asked what could be done to improve the quality of education in the local affiliated primary school:

> *"By 'quality of education', we mean the quality of the government's formal education. There should be no education except formal education to widen our children's knowledge. So, the government should establish schools with adequate facilities and qualified teachers to improve the quality of formal education our children are now struggling to receive in this area."*

This represents an important trend when seen in the context of wider efforts to repair Rakhine's fragile social contract, in that people from all communities are broadly still expecting the state to uphold its side of the bargain in terms of service provision, rather than turning away from it entirely.[94]

Factors affecting access to education

As highlighted in the literature review above, data on the numbers of children attending each grade suggest a significant level of attrition from the education system, both from grade 1 to grade 2, across primary grades, and from grade 5 to grade 6. In the latter case, primary data from this assessment indicates that approximately 19% of students drop out after graduating from grade 5, compared to 53% in affiliated schools. This section examines key issues emerging from FGDs on why children do or do not attend learning spaces at different school levels. It then goes on to frame them in the context of key issues emerging within the secondary data review.

Costs and benefits

Cost-related factors were overwhelmingly cited as the main reason keeping children out of education by FGD participants. Poverty—specifically an inability to pay for the costs of education—was by far the most common single factor, mentioned as a driver in all groups and ranked as the most important driver by all but one. The second most common factor cited was the lack of nearby schools and associated transport costs (86% of groups), and the cost of uniforms, textbooks and other learning materials (69% of groups).

In general, parents described these factors intersecting as follows: at primary school level, almost all children can afford to attend school and few dropped out, since transport costs are generally minimal and education was in theory free for all as of this year. Significantly, FGD participants did not believe many children dropped out of school at primary level, in contradiction to the apparent strong trends observed in secondary data in this regard—possibly again due to the over-representation in the groups of in-school children and their parents. At middle school level, costs start to multiply dramatically given first the added cost of transport out of the village to attend the nearest middle school, as well as costs associated with school fees and learning materials. All of these costs multiply again at high school level, especially given that high schools are often too far for children to commute on a daily basis, meaning they must pay for food and accommodation. The exception in this case were areas running affiliated schools or hiring extra

[94] For further discussion on the fragility of the social contract in Rakhine, see Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps, pp. 6, 38, 41.

teachers to staff under-resourced government facilities. In these cases, cost represents a significant barrier to education even at the primary level (although data above suggest that at least some affiliated schools do provide scholarships to poor students). As one female parent in Sittwe explained, in such contexts, "if you cannot pay, you cannot send your child to any school here."

Coupled with issues of cost, the question of cost-benefit to parents and children was also a major issue. Participants explained that many children dropped out after primary school not just because costs were high, but because poorer parents needed their children to support income-generating activities or domestic labour[95] at home (47% of groups). In this respect, 33% of groups reported that these parents also felt that sending their children to school was a waste of time because they would not be able to access decent jobs after graduating. As one male parent in Pauktaw explained:

> *"There are a few children whose parents are very poor and do not encourage their children to continue their education. They think school will be of no use for poor people like them. They are afraid that they have to pay a lot for their children's education and even if their children do well, they will not get a job that can earn what they have invested…So, they think it is better to make their children learn from their own skills for the future."*

However, FGD participants (whose children were generally in school) generally distanced themselves from this position and asserted that the majority of parents were committed to pursuing a better future for their children through education. As one male parent in Kyauktaw explained:

> *"There is no parent who does not want to see their children become educated and do well in their future. There are parents who have sold their farms and properties to send their children to school in our area. They never want to see their children become uneducated farmers and cultivators like them. So they send their children to school whatever it costs."*

Physical barriers to access

As discussed above, lack of nearby schools was referenced as a barrier to access by a large majority of FGD participants. However, participants did not necessarily distinguish clearly between whether the cost of travel or the exertion/risks of doing so were more important. In either case, children travelling to school in the study area generally face significant challenges to accessing schools not located in their own villages due to widespread absence of adequate transport links.

In general, this issue is less prevalent at primary school level due to the greater coverage of primary schools. FGD participants generally stated that they lived only a few minutes' walk away from primary school, while primary school administrators estimate that their students live an average of 8 minutes' walk away. However, this remains an issue where primary schools are not present—even if children only have to walk to the neighbouring village to attend school, parents are justifiably concerned about allowing five-year-olds (the starting age for grade 1) to walk more than a few minutes outside the house. In this respect, providing safe education for younger primary-school age children was a stated motivation for founding a number of the affiliated schools assessed.

Travelling long distances to school starts to become a significant barrier at middle-school level, and even more so at high-school level. School administrators report an average travel time of 17 minutes for middle/post-primary schools and 34 minutes for high schools. Average estimated furthest distance travelled for students attending primary school was 0.6 miles, compared to 1.2 miles for middle/post-

[95] Reproductive labour encompasses all work devoted toward social reproduction (care and sustenance of other household members), which does not directly generate economic value but nevertheless forms the basis for economic production, which cannot exist without it. In recognition of this dynamic the term is preferred over "housework" or "domestic labour."

primary and 3.4 miles for high school. FGD results suggest that in some cases actual travel distances are much higher—school-age participants in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U reported seeing their contemporaries from more distant villages gradually drop out as they became worn down and exhausted by a daily commute of up to 8 miles in each direction. In the case of high schools, many FGD participants reported that those few who could afford it often took the risk of sending their children alone to private boarding houses in township capitals in order to pursue high school education.

The majority of key informants at village level generally felt that children were safe on their way to school, with around one-quarter saying they did not feel their children of both genders were not generally safe on the way to school. However, around 56% of these key informants did highlight natural hazards as a potential threat to children during their journey. These included crossing rivers/streams, walking through forests, or navigating poor roads during rainy season. Across all townships except Maungdaw and across 78% of all groups, FGD participants mentioned that travelling to schools could be unsafe or risky. Participants in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw talked of the dangers of travelling by boat along swollen streams during the rainy season, with one community key informant reporting a case where two children had drowned on their way to school after a boat capsized. Participants in Minbya and Myebon spoke about having to contend with heavy traffic and bad drivers on their way to school, while participants in Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Sittwe reported having to navigate muddy paths and flooded fields during rainy season in particular. Significantly, neither key informants nor FGD participants raised security issues such as the threat of violence as a major issue while travelling to school (although this may also be related to participants' reluctance to discuss sensitive or difficult topics). Only female students in Myebon reported similar issues, explaining that they were sometimes harassed by drivers along the road to school.

Gender and disability status

Gender as a barrier to education was cited by participants in 17% of FGDs, mainly in Muslim areas of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. Students and parents in both of these townships explained that generally, girls were not allowed to go to school by their parents due to conservative social traditions (these issues were less apparent by contrast in the Muslim FGD community in Sittwe). However, they also mentioned that this barrier might be mitigated if women-only middle and high schools were made available. Discrimination against girls was also reported by female students in the Buddhist Pauktaw FGD community, who said in some households that boys were favoured over girls if parents could only afford to send one of their children to school. In general, information from the FGDs shed no further light on the slight over-representation of girls relative to boys at all school levels in Buddhist areas assessed for this study.

Disability was discussed as a barrier to access among 36% of FGDs, indicating a relatively broad minority awareness of the issue. However, further discussion of the kinds of disabilities involved or challenges faced was minimal.

Examination failure

Finally, participants in 61% of FGDs reported that some children dropped out of school due to repeated failure to pass exams. However, this was generally rated as the least important factor keeping children out of education, implying that it only occurs in a small number of cases. In addition, FGD participants generally did not elaborate on which students did not pass their exams, although in some cases it was noted that such students dropped out or lost interest even if they had supportive parents. Exam pass and repetition rates were not explored in this study and therefore the extent of this issue was impossible to corroborate. It is plausible that this trend is driven by a combination of low teacher numbers or teaching quality, poor learning space environments, and the presence of learning difficulties among children themselves. However, more research is clearly required to verify the extent and scope of the problem.

Summary

Overall, secondary and primary data gathered present a broad overview of the layered barriers keeping children out of school. At the micro-level, household poverty status—hugely significant to FGD participants—is a critical determinant of education access. This then interacts with meso-level factors such as a village's geographical remoteness, the presence or absence of schools, the presence or absence of transport links, and the presence or absence of conflict dynamics restricting movement or access. These factors are in turn intimately bound up with the quality of education, with remote, inaccessible or conflict-affected areas more likely to be under-resourced and under-staffed.

However, these factors are also mediated by macro-level structural barriers, most importantly the economic and political marginalisation of Rakhine relative to the rest of the country, the systematic economic and political marginalisation of its Muslim communities relative to its other inhabitants, and the cultural devaluation of women's education in Muslim communities themselves. Developing a coordinated approach that is able to appropriately and practically respond to both micro-, meso- and macro-level barriers thus represents a critical challenge for both EiE sector partners, development actors and the Union government moving forward.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Evidence from this study indicates that despite the presence of alternative or hybrid arrangements to make up for education coverage gaps, a large majority of children are still dependent on the basic education system to meet their education needs, especially at primary level. In addition, while branch schools form a relatively small part of the basic education system at primary level, they increase in relative importance at middle and high school level. By contrast, although they fill a vital gap in the absence of coverage by basic education schools, affiliated schools and monastic schools are relatively rare. Meanwhile, madrasahs offering religious education are widespread in Muslim communities, although they generally operate alongside rather than in competition with the formal education system.

Basic education schools across much of the study area currently bear the hallmarks of decades of under-investment, both in the education system and in the development of Rakhine as a whole. Many are housed in dilapidated or damaged buildings, overcrowded with students, and desperately in need of WASH resources. Most buildings are also ill-equipped to withstand natural disasters, and schools have few contingency plans in place for when such events do happen. The system is also facing an acute staffing crisis. With teachers handling classes of 40 or more children and often covering several grades simultaneously, students' ability to learn effectively is clearly threatened. Staff attendance is also intermittent, forcing communities to pay out of pocket for extra teachers, many of whom are under-qualified. This problem is especially extreme in remote areas and in communities affected by security threats—real or perceived.

Rakhine has some of the lowest primary enrolment and attendance rates in the country. According to secondary data reviewed, attendance rates in the basic education system decrease rapidly across primary grades, especially between grades 1 and 2. Transitions to middle and high school also represent key points of attrition. Whether children attend school is determined at the local level by an interplay of household level poverty status, proximity to schools, and the quality of the education they provide. At the meso-level this is mediated by geography, conflict settings and specific socio-economic dynamics of each township—with Maungdaw/Buthidaung notably worse than other areas. Finally, at the macro level it is further affected by patterns of political and economic discrimination, both between different communities and between Rakhine and the rest of the Union.

Despite these challenges, education in Rakhine is also at an important turning point. Recent years of dramatically increased government investment are beginning to bear fruit. Primary schools are offering free primary education for the first time this academic year, while expansions in ECCD provision have aimed to address high drop-out rates in early grades.[96] With further increases in foreign aid expected after elections in November 2015, this trend is only likely to continue. At the same time, aid agencies and donors in the state are increasingly looking to expand their focus from humanitarian work to more broad-based early recovery and development activities. Critically, people from all communities still primarily aspire to access good quality education within the formal school system, and expect the government to deliver improvements to it. The next few years thus represent a crucial opportunity to make both tangible improvements to the education system in the state, and through this to contribute to the process of rebuilding its fragile social contracts.

[96] MoE – National Education for All Review, pp. 7-10.

The gaps and opportunities identified in this study suggest a number of key points of action for EiE partners, donors, development agencies and the government moving forward:

Strategic planning

- **Work to develop a whole-state approach for education interventions in Rakhine:**
  This study has demonstrated a twin set of asymmetries regarding the education system in Rakhine. First, the heavily disadvantaged position of the state's education system relative to the rest of the Union; second, the lower levels of education quality and access experienced by people in remote and conflict-affected areas—especially Muslim communities, and in Maungdaw/Buthidaung. Any broader strategy for education interventions moving forward will need to acknowledge and address both of these dynamics in parallel.

- **Work to develop a set of targeting criteria for future interventions by humanitarian and/or development partners:**
  Addressing the needs of "isolated" or "remote" communities in Rakhine is often discussed by aid actors in Rakhine in the context of expanding interventions beyond the existing scope of humanitarian activities.[97] However, criteria for determining which communities might fall into these categories are currently loosely defined and primarily focused on indicators related to conflict sensitivity. In the context of education, targeting criteria could be broadened to include basic indicators such as travel time from the nearest primary/middle/high school, village populations, enrolment rates, and the amount of community resources devoted to supporting education alongside or in the absence of government support.

- **Ensure cross-sectoral coordination between the government, existing EiE partners and new development actors moving forward:**
  As more resources are allocated to Rakhine state and donors and aid actors expand their focus from humanitarian provision toward early recovery and development, maintaining coordination will remain crucial if a whole-state approach to education is to be realized. In particular, EiE partners must take care to coordinate their own activities, planning and advocacy and share lessons learned with new donors and development actors engaging in the education sector—especially local NGOs and the private sector. The challenge of coordinating early recovery activities launched in the wake of Cyclone Komen will likely be a key test in this regard. In addition, efforts within Rakhine must in turn be linked with national-level actors and strategy development, such as the on-going MoE-led Comprehensive Education Strategy Review (CESR) and Education Sector Development Plan.[98]

Expanding access to qualified teaching staff

- **Develop methods to allow for more local recruitment and training of teaching staff:**
  Training enough teaching staff and ensuring their regular presence in schools is currently a major bottleneck in efforts to increase access to quality education in Rakhine. Many communities have developed their own solution this issue by recruiting staff locally, often at considerable financial expense. It is recommended that the MoE and education sector partners develop approaches to decentralizing teacher training and recruitment, taking advantage of existing community-supported arrangements where possible. Recruiting locally has the twofold advantage of making sure teachers can both easily access schools (since difficult or insecure commutes often limit teacher attendance), and provide mother-tongue education in contexts where Myanmar is not children's first language. Such approaches could take the form of distance-learning programmes for locally-recruited teachers, run by education sector partners in collaboration with the SED, TEOs and the Education College in

[97] Rakhine Education in Emergencies Sector – Education in Emergencies.
[98] MoE – National Education for All Review, pp. 3-4.

Kyaukpyu. These could be combined with initial salary support from partners while participants work towards achieving accreditation. EiE partners are especially strongly placed to support such initiatives given their existing experience setting up and running TLSs in emergency contexts. Finally, addressing Muslim teachers' limited ability to access teacher training due to restrictions on their ability to access higher education[99] more broadly must form a core part of any such approach.

Expanding education coverage

- **Draw on lessons learned in emergency contexts to support the extension of education to poorly-covered areas:**
  EiE partners are likewise well-placed to adapt TLS approaches to extending education coverage. With strong selection criteria established, EiE partners could use the TLS model to better support existing affiliated schools or develop new ones, with the ultimate aim of handing these spaces over to the government as branch or basic education schools. This would have the advantage of both reducing the burden on communities of supporting these spaces, as well as ensuring that they uphold a basic set of minimum standards. This approach could be applied in particular to address current gaps in education coverage at middle and secondary levels.

Improving school infrastructure

- **Ensure that standards exist for the construction, upgrading and maintenance of schools:**
  Efforts are currently underway by the MoE and Building Department to develop a set of standard designs for new schools. Myanmar also has an active School Construction Sub-Working Group, which aims to develop a set of safe school guidelines. Such initiatives are urgently needed given the wide range of different qualities of school construction seen to exist across the study area. However, they should also be complemented by a robust system of construction monitoring in order to ensure they are implemented effectively in practice. In addition, adequate standards and resourcing for the maintenance of school buildings should be a priority for the SED and supporting donors/development actors, given the extent of dilapidation of many school buildings assessed.

- **Expand coverage of coordinated WASH in schools interventions:**
  The state of WASH infrastructure in schools across the study area was found to be extremely poor, highlighting an urgent need for the expansion of interventions in this respect. However, care should be taken to coordinate these with hygiene promotion activities, as well as clear maintenance plans involving students where appropriate. In addition, WASH interventions should not occur in isolation from broader efforts to improve infrastructure in order to avoid situations such as the upgrading of latrines in otherwise unsafe and inappropriate school buildings. In this respect, development of WASH standards for schools should be integrated with any attempts to develop wider construction and safety standards.[100] Furthermore, given the amount of time that many children in Muslim communities spend in Madrassahs, such spaces may also represent an entry point for community WASH interventions.

- **Expand coverage of school-based disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions and school retrofitting:**
  Assessed schools demonstrated almost no evidence of either disaster retrofitting or disaster planning. Recent memory of Cyclone Komen and the flooding emergency presents a window of opportunity to expand the current scope of both school-based DRR programming run by development partners, and for the MoE to incorporate DRR education into school curricula in line with the Myanmar Action Plan

[99] Save the Children – Education in Rakhine: Next Steps for the Sector, p. 15.
[100] WASH is notable by its absence in a recent stock-taking exercise conducted by the school construction sub-working group on the state of the sector. See School Construction Sub-Working Group of Educational Technical Working Group – Stock Taking of Actors, Coordination Mechanisms and Initiatives on School Construction, Assessment and Retrofitting in Myanmar (accessed 21 October, 2015).

for Disaster Risk Reduction. As above, madrassahs may represent an additional point of entry for DRR actors.

Advocacy

- **Advocate for increased support to the education system in Rakhine relative to the rest of Myanmar:**
  Rakhine's education system is in urgent need of upgrading not just in absolute terms, but relative to other parts of the country. EiE partners, development partners and the MoE should therefore develop advocacy strategies to ensure that Rakhine is considered for inclusion where appropriate in any new initiatives aimed at supporting "quick wins" in the education sector—especially those driven by on-budget aid from international donors.

- **Advocate for more partners and increased support for the education system in Maungdaw/ Buthidaung:**
  All existing evidence suggests that the education system in these two townships—especially Maungdaw—is stretched to the point of dysfunction. There is thus an urgent need for both increased allocation of government resources to the issue on the one hand, as well as for an expansion in support from EiE and development sector partners on the other. In particular, addressing the glaring gender disparities in education access observed in these areas should be a core focus of any future interventions.

Future research

- **Teaching:**
  The absence of teacher perspectives represents a major gap in this assessment. In light of its findings, more research is urgently needed to better understand the barriers and incentives for those hoping to join the profession, as well as for teachers currently struggling to access schools regularly.

- **Access:**
  The study's secondary data review identified an apparent collapse in attendance from grade 1-2 and across primary grades more generally. However, primary data collected in this study gave little further indication as to the dynamics behind this. Further research is needed on the factors causing drop-out at primary age, with a specific focus on both the experiences of out-of-school children themselves, and the role of ECCD in this process, especially in light of the government's recent decision to expand coverage.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Village key informant questionnaire

Interviewer information	
Name of assessor	
Organisation	
Date	
Geographic information	
Township	
Village tract	
Village	
Main religion in the village	- Buddhist - Muslim - Christian - Hindu - Other
GPS location	
1. Community information	
1.1 List all the places in this village where children go to receive any kind of education **If necessary, prompt with examples of alternative spaces (monastic schools, Madrasa, TLS, etc.)**	**Write down name of each learning space, and contact details of person each charge** **Learning space 1:** • Name _____ • Person in charge_____ • Contact details _____ **Learning space 2:** • Name _____ • Person in charge_____ • Contact details _____ Etc.
1.2 In this village, how many children ages 5-10 are there?	Girls _____ Boys _____
1.2.1 How many children aged 5-10 in this village are currently receiving education from learning spaces of any kind?	Girls _____ Boys _____
1.2.3 Do any children leave the village to go to primary school in other places?	- Yes - No
1.2.4 Where do they go?	
1.3 In this village, how many children aged 11-14 are there?	Girls _____ Boys _____
1.3.1 How many children aged 11-14 in this village are currently receiving education from learning spaces of any kind?	Girls _____ % Boys _____%

1.3.3 Do any children leave the village to go to middle school in other places?	- Yes - No
1.3.4 Where do they go?	
1.4 In this village, how many children aged 15-17 are there?	Girls _____ Boys _____
1.4.1 How many children aged 15-17 are currently receiving education from learning spaces of any kind?	Girls _____ Boys _____
1.4.3 Do any children leave the village to go to high school in other places?	- Yes - No
1.4.4 Where do they go?	
1.5 What kinds of children and young people are least likely to participate in educational activities in your area? **Select and rank up to three**	- Younger girls - Younger boys - Older girls - Older boys - Girls who work - Boys who work - Girls who are married - Boys who are married - Girls from poor households - Boys from poor households - Children with disabilities - Other _____ - None
2. Safety	
2.1 Is it safe for boy students to travel to and from schools or learning spaces in this area?	- Yes - No
2.2 Is it safe for girl students to travel to and from schools or learning spaces in this area?	- Yes - No
2.3 Is it safe for male teachers to travel to and from schools or learning spaces in this area?	- Yes - No
2.4 Is it safe for female teachers to travel to and from schools or learning spaces in this area?	- Yes - No
2.5 What risks are there for children and teachers when they travel to/from learning spaces in this village? **Do not prompt; select as many as apply**	- Abduction - Physical violence - Sexual violence (harassment, abuse, rape) - Natural hazards (e.g. flooding, damaged access routes) - Other _____ - None
2.6 Are boy students safe while they are at schools or learning spaces in this village?	- Yes - No
2.7 Are girl students safe while they are at schools or learning spaces in this village?	- Yes - No
2.8 Are male teachers safe while they are at schools or learning spaces in this village?	- Yes - No
2.9 Are male teachers safe while they are at schools or learning spaces in this village?	- Yes - No
2.10 What risks are there for children and teacher while they are at learning spaces	- Health risks from unsanitary conditions - Unsafe buildings - Being sexually abused or exploited - Schools vulnerable to attack

Do not prompt; select as many as apply	- Schools a potential site for abduction - Exclusion due to ethnicity or language - Other _____ - None
2.11 When or where are boys most vulnerable or exposed to risks in this village? **Do not prompt; select as many as apply**	- Collecting firewood - On their way to/from school - At home - At night - During play time - At bathing spaces - At latrines - Other _____ - None
2.12 When or where are girls most vulnerable or exposed to risks in this village? **Do not prompt; select as many as apply**	- Collecting firewood - On their way to/from school - At home - At night - During play time - At bathing spaces - At latrines - Other _____ - None
3. Information Source	
3.1 Name of the interviewee	
3.2 Interviewee's position	
3.3 Interviewee telephone number	
3.4 **To be filled in by assessor after interview complete:** In your opinion, how reliable is the information collected from this interviewee about this village?	- Mostly reliable - Somewhat reliable - Not very reliable
4. Additional Observations	
Please write any relevant additional observations on this village in the box below:	

Annex 2: Learning space key informant questionnaire

Interviewer information	
Name of assessor	
Organisation	
Date	
Geographic information	
Township	
Village tract	
Village	
GPS location	
Learning space profile	
Learning space name	
Name of person in charge	
Is the school registered with the ministry of education?	- Yes - No
Lowest grade/age of intake (i.e. what is the youngest age of children registered at this school?) **Select one**	Grade 1 (age 5-6) Grade 2 (age 6-7) Grade 3 (age 7-8) Grade 4 (age 8-9) Grade 5 (age 9-10) Grade 6 (age 10-11) Grade 7 (age 11-12) Grade 8 (age 12-13) Grade 9 (age 13-14) Grade 10 (age 14-15) Grade 11 (age 15-16)
Highest grade/age of graduation (i.e. what is the oldest age of children registered at this school?) **Select one**	- Grade 1 (age 5-6) - Grade 2 (age 6-7) - Grade 3 (age 7-8) - Grade 4 (age 8-9) - Grade 5 (age 9-10) - Grade 6 (age 10-11) - Grade 7 (age 11-12) - Grade 8 (age 12-13) - Grade 9 (age 13-14) - Grade 10 (age 14-15) - Grade 11 (age 15-16)
Learning space type **Select one**	Government school Branch school Affiliated school Monastic school Madrassah Temporary Learning Space Other _____
1. Access	
1.1 Is this learning space currently functioning?	- Yes - No
1.1.1 If no, specify reason	

1.2 How many children are enrolled at this learning space at primary level (or aged 5-10)?	1.2.1 Girls ____ 1.2.2 Boys ____
1.3 How many primary level (or aged 5-10) children are present at learning space today?	1.3.1 Girls ____ 1.3.2 Boys ____
1.4 How many children are enrolled at this learning space at middle school level (or aged 11-14)?	1.4.1 Girls ____ 1.4.2 Boys ____
1.5 How many primary level (or aged 11-14) children are present at learning space today?	1.5.1 Girls ____ 1.5.2 Boys ____
1.6 How many children are enrolled at this learning space at high school level (or aged 15-17)?	1.6.1 Girls ____ 1.6.2 Boys ____
1.7 How many high school level (or aged 15-17) children are present at learning space today?	1.7.1 Girls ____ 1.7.2 Boys ____
1.8 How is school attendance now, compared to before the cyclone?	Fewer children attending Same number of children attending More children attending
1.9 Are there multiple shifts being used at this learning space?	- Yes - No
1.10 Do children from any vulnerable or at-risk groups attend this learning space? **Select as many as apply**	- Children with disabilities - Orphans - Children without parent/guardian - Over-age children - Pregnant learners/young mothers - Minority ethnic or religious groups - Displaced students - Others ____ - None
1.11 Does your learning space make any efforts to help vulnerable students access, participate and/or stay in school? **Select as many as apply**	- Child protection monitoring - School feeding - Providing sanitary materials for girls - Providing uniforms for girls - Providing scholarships or waiving fees - Flexible time shifts - Separate classes for older learners - Accommodate students who don't know the language of the school materials or exams? - Drop-out monitoring - Accelerated learning classes - Childcare services/ECD arrangements - Others ____ - None
1.12 On average, how long does it take for students to reach this learning space? (in minutes, walking)	____ minutes
1.13 What is the furthest distance students must travel to this learning space? (kilometres)	____ kilometres
1.14 Is it safe for the children to travel to this learning space?	- Yes - No
1.14.1 If not, why not? **Select as many as apply**	- Abduction - Physical violence - Sexual violence (harassment, abuse, rape) - Natural hazards (e.g. flooding, damaged access routes) - Other _____ - None

2. Teaching and learning	
2.1 What is the mother language of children at this learning space?	2.1.1 Mother language of majority of students ___ 2.1.2 Mother language of minority of students (if any) ___
2.2 What is/are the primary languages of instruction at this learning space?	2.2.1 Main language____ 2.2.2 Second language (if any) ____ 2.2.3 Third language (if any) ____
2.3 How students at this learning space have a full set of textbooks?	0-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%
2.4 How many teachers at this learning space have a full set of textbooks?	0-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%
2.5 How many hours per day does the learning space operate?	
2.6 How many hours per day do students spend in classes?	
2.7 How many days per week does the learning space operate?	
2.8 What percentage (%) of enrolled children attend this learning space 5 or more days per week?	
2.9 Does the learning space currently teach any part of the government curriculum?	- Yes - No
2.9.1 Which subjects does it offer?	
2.10 Do children attending this learning space sit for government examinations at this site?	- Yes - No
2.10.1 (If no) Are children attending this this learning space able to sit for government examinations at another site nearby?	- Yes - No
2.11 What proportion of children of children at this learning space sit for government matriculation exams? **Either at this site or elsewhere**	Girls ____% Boys ____%
2.12 What proportion of children at this learning space who finish 5th grade move on to 6th grade **Either at this site or elsewhere**	Girls ____% Boys ____%
2.13 Does this learning space provide students with course completion documents, eg, transfer certificates, diplomas or graduation certificates?	- Yes - No
2.14 (If yes) Are these completion documents recognised by government education authorities?	- Yes - No
3. Teaching staff	
3.1 How many teachers are there currently working at this learning space?	Female ____ Male ____
3.2 How many teachers are present and teaching at this learning space today?	Female ____ Male ____

3.3 How many teachers at this learning space have matriculated from Grade 10 or higher in the government school system?	Female ____ Male ____
3.4 How many teachers at this learning space are government teachers?	Female ____ Male ____
3.5 How many teachers at this learning space are paid by the ministry of education?	Female ____ Male ____
3.6 How many teachers at this learning space are paid by NGOs, parents or sources other than the government?	Female ____ Male ____
3.7 How many teachers at this learning space are working as volunteers without payment?	Female ____ Male ____
4. General facilities (Note – this section involves direct observation of learning space facilities)	
4.1 What kind of building is the learning space?	- Temporary structure (tents) - Semi-permanent structure (e.g. bamboo, palm) - Permanent structure (e.g. wood, brick, concrete)
4.2 How many classrooms are there at this learning space? **Classrooms = partitioned spaces** **Confirm with observation**	
4.3 On average, how many students are learning around each blackboard or teacher? **Confirm with observation; provide an average figure after observing several teaching areas**	
4.4 How many classrooms at this learning space have an adequate amount of available furniture (desks, chairs, benches, blackboards)? **Confirm with observation**	- 0-25% - 26-50% - 51-75% - 76-100%
4.5 Do any classrooms have any structural damage making them inaccessible or unsafe? **Confirm with observation**	____ classrooms damaged
4.5.1 (If yes) specify damage	
4.6 Are any other areas of the learning space inaccessible or unsafe? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
4.6.1 (If yes) specify damage	
4.7 Has anything been done to this learning space so that it will withstand cyclones, floods or other natural hazards? **E.g. strengthening of walls. Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
4.8.1 Does this learning space have a plan that specifies what should be done in the event of an emergency?	- Yes - No

4.9 Does the learning space have a space for recreation within its compound? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5. WASH Facilities (Note – this section involves direct observation of learning space facilities)	
5.1 Does the learning space have access to a source of safe water within/near to its compound? **Safe water sources = piped water, public tap, tube well/borehole, protected well or spring** **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5.1.1 Are the students able to drink from that source today? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5.1.2 Has water been available all year round from that source during the past school year?	- Yes - No
5.2 How many functioning latrines are there at this learning space? **Confirm with observation**	
5.3 Are there separate latrines for male/female students? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5.4 Are there separate latrines for students and teachers?	- Yes - No
5.5 Are there separate latrines for male and female teachers?	- Yes - No
5.6 What proportion of latrines are clean and sanitary? **Confirm with observation**	- 0-25% - 26-50% - 51-75% - 76-100%
5.7 Are any of the latrines accessible for people with disabilities? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5.8 Are hand-washing facilities available at or near the latrines? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5.9 Are sanitary napkins available for girl students? **Confirm with observation**	- Yes - No
5.10 Is there any evidence of open defecation at the learning space site?	- Yes - No
6. Information Source	
6.1 Name of the interviewee	-
6.2 Interviewee's position	-
6.3 Interviewee telephone number	-

6.4 **To be filled in by assessor after interview complete:** In your opinion, how reliable is the information collected from this interviewee about this learning space? **Think – does the information provided by the interviewee match your observations of the school site?**	- Mostly reliable - Somewhat reliable - Not very reliable
7. Additional Observations	
Please write any relevant additional observations on this learning space in the box below:	

Annex 3: FGD guide for parents

Informed consent

Hello, my name is ____ My role is _____ and I work for ____. We are conducting an assessment to understand people in Rakhine state's experiences of education. We are trying to find out what they think is good and bad about the places children go to learn, and what challenges they face in getting education for their children.

This assessment is not linked to any aid for any particular village community. Instead, its aim is to help aid agencies and the government plan activities to improve education services. We therefore cannot offer you any direct aid or incentives as a result of this interview. However, your opinions and experiences will make a very important contribution to our understanding of your situation and experiences. Everything you say us will be kept confidential. We are interested to hear all your opinions, both positive and negative. At the end of this assessment we will make a report and share it with all actors involved in disaster management planning, but we will not mention the name of your community, your names, or who said what in this discussion.

You can decide whether you want to take part in the discussion or not. Once my questions have started, you have the right to refuse to answer any question, or to leave the interview at any time. If you choose not to take part or to skip any questions, it will have no negative impacts on your ability to access services from _____ or any other agency. Please feel free to ask me any questions now, or at any point during the discussion. Do you consent to participate in this discussion?

Interviewer information	
Name of assessor	
Organisation	
Date	
Geographic information	
Township	
Village tract	
Village	
GPS location	
Participant information	
Participant group	- Children - Parents
Participant gender	- Male - Female
Total number of participants	
Age of youngest participant	
Age of oldest participant	

1. What places do children in this community go to receive education?
    - [Prompt on existence of alternative educational institutions]

2. What do you think are the strong points of these places?
    - [Ask participants to compare different institutions if they have listed then]
    - Quality of facilities (classrooms, WASH etc.)

- Quality of teachers and staff
- Quality of curriculum

3. What do you think could be improved about these places?
    - [Ask participants to compare different institutions if they have listed then]
    - Quality of facilities (classrooms, WASH etc.)
    - Quality of teachers and staff
    - Quality of curriculum

4. [If participants report different kinds of learning spaces in their community] Why do you think different parents send their children to different learning spaces?

5. What do you think can be done to improve the quality of the education children receive in the learning spaces in this area?

6. How far do children in this village have to travel to school?
    - Do children in this village have to pay to travel to school? How much?
    - Do you think they are safe when they travel? Why/why not?

7. Do all of the children in this community go to school?
    - Which kinds of children don't go to school?

8. Do you have any friends or know any families whose children don't attend school?
    - Why don't they attend?
    - What could be done to help them attend?

Ask participants to list as many reasons they can think of for why children don't attend. Write these on a flipchart as you go.

When you have as many as people can think of, draw a grid with the reasons on both sides (see example below). Ask people to compare the reasons in pares and say which of the pair is more important. When you have compared all pairs, you will be able to rank the reasons.

	Too far to travel	Bad teachers	Expensive
Too far to travel		Bad teachers	Expensive
Bad teachers			Bad teachers

Annex 4: FGD guide for children

Informed consent

Hello, my name is ____ My role is _____ and I work for ____. We are conducting an assessment to understand people in Rakhine state's experiences of education. We are trying to find out what they think is good and bad about the places children go to learn, and what challenges they face in getting education for their children.

This assessment is not linked to any aid for any particular village community. Instead, its aim is to help aid agencies and the government plan activities to improve education services. We therefore cannot offer you any direct aid or incentives as a result of this interview. However, your opinions and experiences will make a very important contribution to our understanding of your situation and experiences. Everything you say us will be kept confidential. We are interested to hear all your opinions, both positive and negative. At the end of this assessment we will make a report and share it with all actors involved in disaster management planning, but we will not mention the name of your community, your names, or who said what in this discussion.

You can decide whether you want to take part in the discussion or not. Once my questions have started, you have the right to refuse to answer any question, or to leave the interview at any time. If you choose not to take part or to skip any questions, it will have no negative impacts on your ability to access services from _____ or any other agency. Please feel free to ask me any questions now, or at any point during the discussion. Do you consent to participate in this discussion?

Interviewer information	
Name of assessor	
Organisation	
Date	
Geographic information	
Township	
Village tract	
Village	
GPS location	
Participant information	
Participant group	- Children - Parents
Participant gender	- Male - Female
Total number of participants	
Age of youngest participant	
Age of oldest participant	

9. What are your favourite things about going to school?
    - What do you like about the facilities? (classrooms, WASH etc.)
    - What do you like about the teachers/staff?
    - What do you like about the things you learn?

10. If you were in charge of your school, what would you change to make it better?

- What would you improve about the facilities? (classrooms, WASH etc.)
- What would you improve about the teachers/staff?
- What would you improve the things you learn?

11. Do children attending education in this area all go to the same type of school, or do they go to different kinds of schools? **[Note – focus on different types of learning space, not different age ranges]**
    - [If yes] why do you think different children go to different schools?

12. How do you travel to school?
    - How far do children in this village have to travel to school? How long does it take them?
    - Do children in this village have to pay to travel to school? How much?
    - Do you feel safe when you travel? Why/why not?

13. Do all of the children in this community go to school?
    - Which kinds of children don't go to school?

14. Do you have any friends or know any children who don't attend school?
    - Why don't they attend?
    - What could be done to help them attend

Ask participants to list as many reasons they can think of for why children don't attend. Write these on a flipchart as you go.

When you have as many as people can think of, draw a grid with the reasons on both sides (see example below). Ask people to compare the reasons in pares and say which of the pair is more important. When you have compared all pairs, you will be able to rank the reasons.

	Too far to travel	Bad teachers	Expensive
Too far to travel		Bad teachers	Expensive
Bad teachers			Bad teachers
Expensive			