

## Provision of Continuing Education in Myanmar

U Myint Han  
Chairman  
Myanmar Education Research Bureau

### Background

1. Education has been a long process, which has not been limited with respect to either time or space. Continuing education includes all of the learning opportunities all people want or need outside of basic literacy education and primary education. Thus, continuing education is especially for literate youth and adults via formal education, non-formal education and even informal education.

2. The provision of Continuous Education (CE) should be the essential component of any Non-formal Education (NFE) programme to be more attractive and effective. After Jomtiem Declaration of Education For All (EFA) in 1990, Myanmar has endeavoured to implement EFA programme at a nation-wide scale. As the result, about one million people became literate. These newly literate people need or want to have CE by NFE mode. Thus, there is an urgent need to provide CE by establishing Community Learning Center (CLC), through out Myanmar.

3. The *profile* of the Union of Myanmar is as follows:

(a) Total population in 1998	47.25 million
(b) Area	676,578 sq-km
(c) Population density	70 per sq-km
(d) Average population growth rate	1.84 %
(e) No of State and Division	14
(f) No of Township	325
(g) Nationalities	135
(h) Basic Education structure	5:4:2
(i) Percentage distribution of population by age	

4. The Ministry of Education is mainly responsible for human resource development. If there is a strong foundation in education, economic growth and social progress will be quite sure. By education, it does not mean only for formal education but for non-formal and in-formal education as well. Under EFA programme, Myanmar has endeavoured to form a learning society that will be essential for the 21 century.

5. There are 10 departments under the Ministry of Education. The Departments of Higher Education and Basic Education take care of formal education whereas Myanmar Education Research Bureau (MERB) is the focal institute for non-formal education. Thus, the NFE activities have been being carried out by MERB with co-operation and co-ordination of GOs, NGOs and UN agencies. The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) of JAPAN is a very close partner of MERB, especially in the NEF area.

6. Regarding the *formal education* in Myanmar, the following are the facts and figures both for Basic Education (Elementary and Secondary Education) and Higher Education (Tertiary Education).

**Number of Institutions by Level  
(SY 1998-99)**

<i>Level</i>	<i>No of Institution</i>
Primary	37618
Lower Secondary	3698
Upper Secondary	1568
Degree College	26
College	32
University	47

7. The *literacy situation* in Myanmar as express in the statistical report is as follows:

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| (a) literacy rate (1983) | 78% |
| (b) literacy rate (1996) | 83% |

8 According to the 1999 statistical data, the following table shows the real-life situation of the implementation of *NFE/EFA programme* in Myanmar.

**Implementation of Non-formal Education  
(As of 1999)**

Implemented townships	145
Learning circles	20597
Instructors	43734
Illiterates	T 667867 F 425191
Learners	T 248470 F 187540
Learners who become literate	T 106702 F 73711
Basic Literacy Package distributed	396990

Cost of packages from Education Budget (Kyat)	25 million
---	------------

9. Under the guidance of Myanmar EFA Coordinating Committee, MERB has carried out projects and programmes concerning NFE for the benefit of out-of-school population in rural and slum areas. It has endeavoured to implement the project on CE through Community Learning Centres. CE programmes are to be given priority for the future development in NFE programmes. Since there is an urgent need for Human Resource Development (HRD) programme in Myanmar, NFE mode of education is essential to form a learning society. The necessary and sufficient condition is now ready for this innovative project.

### Aim and Objectives

10. **Aim:** The *aim* of the project is to create community-based learning groups, which are self-sustaining and linked by a nation-wide network mobilizing local resources by applying “For them, By them, With them” concept.

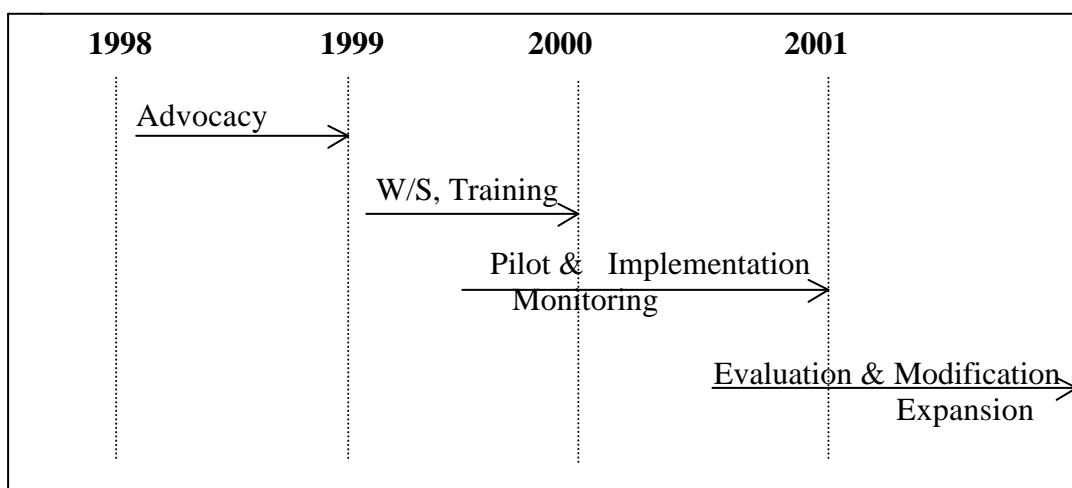
**Objectives:** The *objectives* are as follows:

- (a) To provide CE through CLCs in Myanmar
- (b) To establish CLCs in the townships where the basic literacy programme has been completed.

11. **Target:** The *target groups* are 106702 newly literates and out-of-school population who need CE for their better, fuller and richer lives.

12. **Timeframe :** *Timeframe* of the project are as follows:

### Timeframe for CE project implementation



## Partners

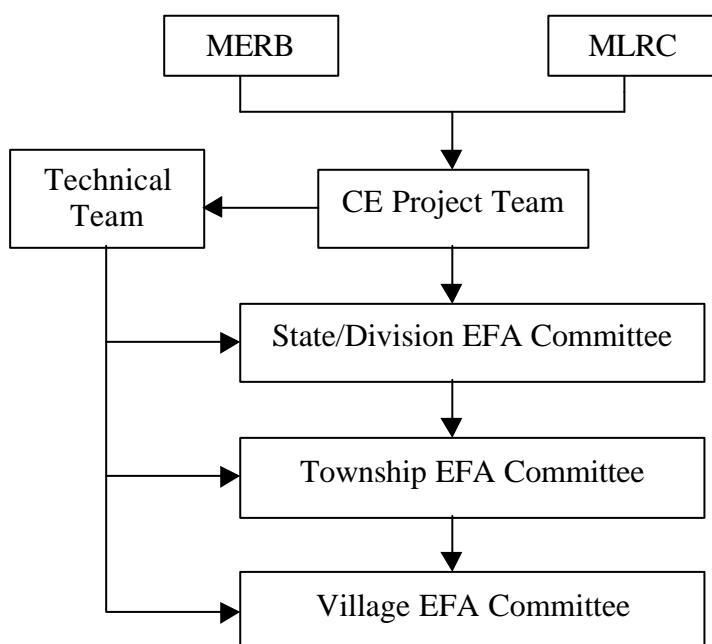
13 GOs such as Departments of Basic Education, Department of Educational Planning and Training, NGOs such as Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs, Young Men’s Buddhist Association, Young Women’s Christian Association, Myanmar Anti Narcotic Association and UN agencies such as UNESCO (ACCU)/PROAP, UNDP, UNICEF and local authorities are the partners of MERB and Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC) for the project. **Funding** is made to the project by the departmental budget of MERB and donation from the well -wishers. The **implementing agencies** are MERB/MLRC and local EFA Committees with the assistance of the above partner agencies.

## Process

14 **Planning and management:** MERB and the Executive Body for Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC ) did the planning. The NFE Executive Committee approved the plan for providing CE through CLCs in Myanmar.

15 For the effective implementation of this project, the **management structure** is as follows:

### Management Structure



16 **Strategy :** The *strategy* for provision CE through CLCs is community participation for self-reliance, purposive, self- planned and self-initiative approach, Self-sustaining activities are been encouraged with the active involvement of GOs, NGOs, and community itself.

### ***Implementation of CE Programme***

17 Up to now, Myanmar provide CE through the two channels, namely the FE channel by the Departments of Human Resource Development Centre and the NFE channel by the various departments and organizations including NGOs.

18 ***Continuing Education through Formal Education:*** The recent development for CE through Formal Education mode is the establishment of National Centre for Human Resource Development. The existing situation described in EDUCATION IN MYANMAR, Ministry of Education (September 1999) is as follows:

- The National Centre for Human Resource Development (NCHRD) based at the Department of Higher Education (Lower Myanmar) was established by the Ministry of Education in June 1998. Under the National Centres are Centres for Human Resource Development (CHRD) located at the universities, degree colleges and colleges under the two Higher Education Departments of the Ministry of Education.
- The number of certificate and diploma courses offered by the various centres now total 65 . They offer a wide variety of options extending from foreign language courses, computer courses, engineering courses, business management course, gemology course, and mushroom cultivation course to cosmetic technology course. 15705 persons have completed the courses with their ages ranging from 5 to 70.
- To further realize its aim to cater to the educational needs of as many persons as possible and to offer as many options as possible, the Human Resource Development Centres plan to introduce degree courses in such areas as business management and accounting studies, environmental studies, biotechnology, and information technology in the near future.

19. ***Continuing Education through Non-Formal Education:*** After Basic Literacy and Numeracy Programme, CE is provided through NFE mode that is flexible, relevant, practical and effective for the out-of-school population. The Myanmar Education Research Bureau, as the focal institution for NFE in Myanmar, endeavoured to establish CLCs and to provide CE programme.

20. The ***recent achievement*** for CE is the plan of actions to establish Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC) that aims at developing NFE materials, training NFE personnel and networking among national and international agencies. The Embassy of Japan in Myanmar and ACCU of Japan financially and technically provide the MLRC. After having completed MLRC building, more systematic and effective implementation of CE through CLCs will follow with cooperation and coordination of GOs and NGOs. The resource mobilization will become more effective and efficient.

21. Now in Myanmar, UNDP project has tried to establish 38 CLCs in Shan State, Dry zone and Delta. Moreover, the non-government organizations like Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (MNCWA) and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA) have their own programmes for income generation, better life and small loan. It is known that Mandalay Division is very successful in these areas.

### Inputs

22. **Literacy and CE Materials:** MERB has been producing literacy materials and CE materials since 1990 in co-operation with UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and ACCU.

#### Literacy and CE Materials Produced

<u>Material</u>	<u>Quantity (Kinds)</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. Basic Literacy Packages	3	MERB/UNICEF
2. Functional Literacy Packages	32	MERB/UNICEF
3. Skills-based Literacy Packages	32	MERB/UNICEF/UNDP
4. Skills-based Literacy Modules for Out-of-School Children and Youth	8	DTAVE/UNICEF
5. Learning Packages for Women with Limited Reading Skills	23	IOE/UNDP
6. Learning Packages for Minority People (Shan)	21	MERB/ACCU
7. Vocational Packages	20	MERB/ACCU
8. Reading Cards	14	MERB
9. AJP Materials in National Version	10	MERB/DBE/UNDP/ACCU
10. AJP Materials in National Version (With three videotapes)	3	MERB/ACCU
11. Materials for Post-Literacy (Leaflets, booklets, video programme, etc.)	10	MERB
12. Materials for CE	21	MERB/ACCU

[See the list of literacy and CE materials in Annex ]

23 Main features of **personnel** are commitment, devotion and innovation. The budget of MERB already spent for Literacy and continuing education is about 25million (Kyat).

24 **Capacity Building:** The workshops and the meetings on Continuing Education were held as follows:

- (1) National Workshop on Development of Basic Literacy Learning Materials for Minority Peoples. (24-4-96 to 10-5-96)
- (2) National Workshop on the Preparation of Vocational Learning Materials. (30-10-96 to 9-11-96)

- (3) National Workshop on the Preparation of Literacy Learning Materials on Agriculture. (20-3-98 to 3-4-98)
- (4) National Workshop on Development of Strategies for Continuing Education through Community Learning Centres in Myanmar. (23-2-99 to 4-3-99)
- (5) Consultative Meeting for Literacy Resource Centres for Girls and Women (LRC) in Myanmar. (23-8-99 to 25-8-99)

25 The *recent achievement* for NFE in general and CE in particular is the establishment of MLRC. The Embassy of Japan and Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) are now supporting finance and techniques to MLRC. The following activities were conducted recently.

- (1) ACCU Workshop on CE via CLCs (Feb-Mar 1999)
- (2) ACCU Planning Meeting (July 1999)
- (3) The Consultative Meeting (Aug 1999)
- (4) The Construction of MLRC Building (Oct 1999-Mar 2000)

**National Workshop on Development of Strategies  
for Promoting Continuing Education  
through Community Learning Centres in Myanmar  
by MERB, ACCU and UNESCO/PROAP  
at Yangon on 23 February to 4 March 1999**

***Capacity Building***

- 32 participants
- 6 international experts
- 12 local resource persons
- 10 staff from MERB

***Input***

- Sharing of views and experiences
- Presentations by UNESCO, ACCU and resource persons
- Discussion

***Process***

- Field survey to village CLCs
- Needs assessment by NP method
- Group work on materials production & field-testing.
- Revision of materials
- Follow-up activities

***Outcome***

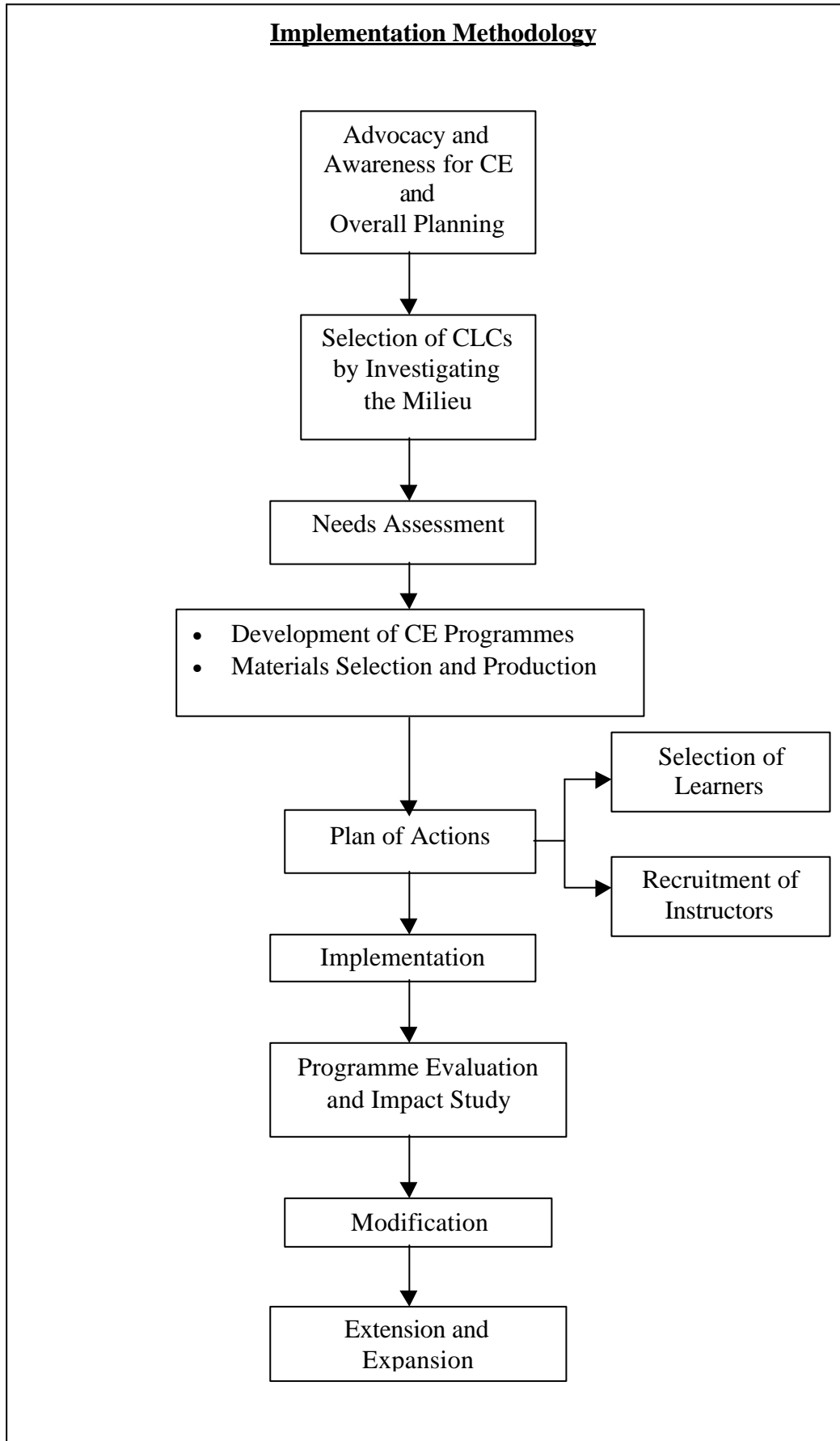
- Knowledge and skills on NFE
- Capacity building

***Output***

- Manual on CLC establishment and management
- Six follow-up plans in six townships

***Materials Production***

Booklet	2
Poster	3
Pamphlet	1
Games	2
Jigsaw puzzle	1
Folder	2
Song	1
Video programme	1
Total	13



## **Strength and Weakness**

### 26. ***Strength:***

- Learner centered
- Flexible but structure
- Easy entry
- Wide accessibility
- Cheap
- Customized
- Integrated as a national strategy for human resource development

Due to having the above characteristics, the learners are very eager to have CE after the basic literacy programme.

### 27 ***Weakness:***

- Needs for advocacy and awareness
- Need to train CE personnel
- Poor availability of resource persons
- Misconception of literacy
- Need to develop the common curriculum that will be simple, relevant and attractive to different localities.

As CE can function as a supporting system, it can be very effective in materializing national human resource development. Thus, actions are taken for the effective implementation of CE in Myanmar.

### 28 ***Actions taking:***

- Field visit and discussion
- Conducting workshops
- Sharing of views and experiences

## **Impact Evaluation**

29 Up to now, there are about 100 CLCs and many learning circles in Myanmar. CE is now introduced by edhoc manner. There is an urgent need to conduct impact evaluation or programme evaluation to have tangible and lasting impact in terms of organizational structure, feasibility, acceptability, ideology, educational practice, skill development and better life program such as health, and learner's participation and communication. It will be carried out after the workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation of Continuing Education in Myanmar that will be conducted with UNESCO/PROAP assistance on January 2000. At that workshop the participants will conduct impact evaluation in the selected project areas. Their finding will reflect the real-life conditions on CE in Myanmar. The trained participants of that workshop will be the evaluators to find the impact of CE programme.

## **Conclusion**

30. It is earnestly hoped that the provision of CE in both FE and NFE sectors will be attractive and effective to Myanmar people.

**List of Literacy and CE Materials**

<b>Title</b>	<b>No. of copies</b>
<b>1. Basic Literacy</b>	
Basic Literacy booklets	900,000
Guide for B.L Packages	15,000
<b>2. Post-Literacy</b>	
Shan-Myanmar Primer (1&2) (ACCU Workshop)	8,000
To Help Who Wish to Learn (ACCU Workshop)	4,000
Ma Ni Smiles (Shan) (ACCU Workshop)	4,000
Reading Cards (8 Kinds)	40,000
Revised Booklets (10 Kinds)	20,000
<b>3. Functional and Skills-based Literacy</b>	
Functional Literacy Packages(MERB/UNICEF)	64,000
Skills-based Literacy Packages (MERB/UNDP)	64,000
<b>4. Income Generation</b>	
Plastic Duster (Reading Card)	15,000
Mushroom Growing	50,000
Reading Cards (8 Kinds)	10,800
Fan/Hat Marking (ACCU Workshop)	64,000
Basket Weaving (ACCU Workshop)	2,000
Masonry	2,000
Dress Making	2,000
Grafting (MERB-ACCU)	35,000
Bamboo Handicraft (MERB-ACCU)	35,000
<b>5. Video Program</b>	
Ma Ni Smiles (Myanmar/Shan)	
Malaria (ACCU Workshop)	
Making Bean Sprout	
Making Rosalie Juice & Jam	
Plastic Duster (ACCU Workshop)	
Mushroom Growing (ACCU Workshop)	
Ma Ni Village and River	
Grafting (ACCU Workshop)	

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
MYANMAR EDUCATION RESEARCH BUREAU**

**PROVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION  
IN MYANMAR**

**By  
U MYINT HAN  
November 1999**