

Global justice, national education and local realities in Myanmar: a civil society perspective

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Abstract

This paper examines social justice in relation to the Myanmar education system, from the perspective of participation in decision-making; the social background of students; culture; language and local knowledge. It highlights the current state of education in Myanmar, including the national education law, the national education strategic plan and educational practice in different types of school systems. I argue that the education system in Myanmar is centralized and there is little space for stakeholders' participation in decision-making. Furthermore, the government is now promoting privatization in education, which increases inequality among social classes. Since the language and culture of the ruling majority Bamar (Myanmar) dominate the school curriculum, indigenous rights to education are neglected. Excluding local wisdom and indigenous knowledge can be considered as part of the colonization of knowledge, through the government education system. In conclusion, the paper suggests key changes that are needed to support a socially just and humanistic approach to education

Keywords

Myanmar (Burma) Social justice Rights to education
Mother tongue-based education Academic freedom

Abbreviations

CESR

Comprehensive Education Sector Review

IDP

Internally Displaced Persons

MTB-MLE

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

NESP

National Education Strategic Plan

NLD

National League for Democracy

NNER

National Network for Education Reform

TBC

The Border Consortium

TCF

Thinking Classroom Foundation

UN

United Nations

UNDRIP

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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