

A group of children in Myanmar are joyfully receiving schoolbags. The bags are black with orange accents and feature the World Vision logo. The children are of various ages and are dressed in colorful, traditional clothing. They are standing in front of a building with a corrugated metal roof. The background is a large, bright orange circle. The text "A NATION IN CRISIS: PROTECTING MYANMAR'S CHILDREN THROUGH EDUCATION" is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

**A NATION IN CRISIS:
PROTECTING MYANMAR'S
CHILDREN THROUGH
EDUCATION**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian values, we are dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. We serve all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

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As of March 2025, over a third of Myanmar’s population, a staggering 19.9 million people, require humanitarian assistance. This includes 6.3 million children facing escalating food insecurity, limited healthcare access, and interrupted education.¹ The devastating March 2025 earthquake, which shook Myanmar and the surrounding region, has pushed those already dire numbers even higher. In an era of increasingly strained global aid budgets, it is more critical than ever that children are not overlooked as Myanmar recovers from this catastrophe. The international community must act now to ensure education is prioritised and integrated as part of the humanitarian response.

Almost 25% of Myanmar’s population is under the age of 15, however escalating conflict since 2021 has had a devastating impact on their education.² More than half of children who are internally displaced, returnees or stateless people, almost 589,000, have not been able to access formal education³. Rising displacement from conflict and economic collapse has severely undermined livelihoods, increased vulnerabilities and taken away the possibility for children to learn in a safe and secure environment. This crisis has compounded by a persistent shortage of educators, many of whom left the country as the conflict intensified.

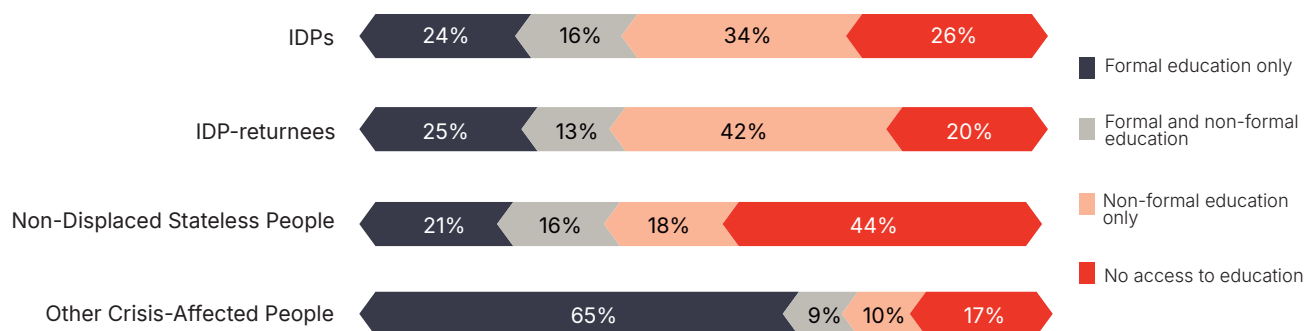


Figure 1 Proportion of assessed children aged 5-18 years old reported to access education (Source: [Myanmar Education Cluster Strategy \(2024\) - Myanmar | ReliefWeb](#))

World Vision Myanmar’s Education in Emergencies Programme

World Vision Myanmar is committed to enhancing access to quality education and fostering child-friendly school environments and has prioritized Education in Emergency (EiE) initiatives with the support of the global education fund and movement, Education Cannot Wait. Over the past number of years, the EiE programme has provided crucial opportunities for children to either begin their education or, for those whose learning has been disrupted, to re-engage with learning.

Alarming, in Myanmar more than 1 million children aged 5 to 17 are trapped in child labour, and up to 67% of disabled children face significant barriers to education.⁴ The EiE programme directly addresses these challenges by offering tailored learning opportunities that consider the specific barriers and needs of marginalized girls and boys, particularly those facing safety and protection issues such as gender-based violence, early marriage, disability, poverty, and security risks.

At the heart of World Vision’s EiE programme is a focus on gender equality and those most marginalised groups. It is essential to establish crisis-resilient education systems with and for all children. Quality, safe, gender transformative education is a critical tool to building more just, equal, and peaceful societies, as is the inclusion of local organizations in the design and delivery of programmes, who play a vital role in accessing vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations. This local engagement has been crucial in

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/third-myanmars-population-faces-food-insecurity-un-human-rights-experts>

² <https://data.who.int/countries/104>

³ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/00632da8-7686-4571-a03f-cfaf32c9e73a/Myanmar%202025%20HNR%20-%20English%20version.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/myanmar-too-many-children-still-hazardous-and-unsafe-forms-work>



overcoming logistical challenges, such as access to remote areas, while ensuring that education remains resilient and relevant to the needs of children and families.

Across 122 villages in conflict-affected areas of Myanmar, the establishment of child-friendly spaces provides vital learning opportunities for displaced children. A primary objective of these spaces is to create a secure, comfortable, and conducive environment for engaging in educational activities. In numerous villages where physical learning spaces have been destroyed, building renovations have been necessary, with careful consideration given to ensuring accessibility for disabled children. By the end of 2024, a total of 8,942 children had accessed formal and non-formal education activities through this programme.

Playgroup activities have been established for children aged 3 to 5, fostering early development through engaging and interactive learning. For children aged 6 to 12, reading clubs provide a structured environment to improve literacy and foster a love of reading. Targeted education programmes have been put in place for those under 18 to help them transition to further learning or vocational training. By creating these age-appropriate learning spaces, EiE programme ensures that every child, regardless of their circumstances, has access to safe, inclusive, and quality education that meets their developmental needs. This initiative is part of a broader effort to build resilience and support the education of marginalized children in Myanmar amidst ongoing crisis.

A significant achievement of the programme has been the recruitment and training of almost 280 educators from within the community. These educators work closely with parents to encourage school attendance and cultivate safe, inclusive schools where all students can learn in a supportive environment. Parents are actively involved in identifying educational pathways for their children and integrating learning into daily routines. Additionally, by incorporating safeguarding awareness into parental education sessions, the programme not only empowers parents to protect their children but also contributes to safer communities.

Community and parental literacy training lays a strong foundation for children's literacy development and ensures continued access to education, even when active conflict prevents attendance at formal learning spaces. Communities have also been equipped with home-schooling materials and book banks to enable to continue their education even if active conflict interrupts their routine. In addition, 117 Education Management Committees (EMCs) were formed with 1,368 members to manage and lead school-based activities. EMC members have been trained in planning, leadership, safeguarding, gender equity, and child protection. Regular meetings of these EMC's have contributed to stronger local ownership, inclusive practices, and improved access to quality education, particularly for girls and vulnerable children.

Looking Ahead: Investing in Myanmar's Future

Education is not a privilege, but a fundamental right and a critical need for children caught in humanitarian crises and conflict. Providing access to learning offers them a pathway to a brighter future, enabling them to reach their full potential and develop essential skills for the future. In Myanmar, the escalating conflict and subsequent displacement have severely curtailed children's access to education nationwide, underscoring the undeniable link between conflict and educational disruption. It is precisely in such contexts that EiE programming plays a vital and lifesaving role.

Globally, it is estimated that the failure of children to achieve basic skills incurs costs of US\$10 trillion. These include direct impacts such as reduced income and productivity, alongside broader fiscal repercussions such as decreased tax revenue and increased public spending.⁵ Myanmar's current education spending is significantly below the international benchmarks of 4–6% of GDP and 20% of the national budget. Strengthening government investment is essential to build a more resilient, inclusive, and equitable education system for crisis-affected children.

EiE not only responds to crises, but allows communities to build back better, strengthening the resilience of schools, teachers, and communities against future shocks. World Vision Myanmar supports Disaster Risk Reduction integrated education approaches, including safe school design, community preparedness, psychosocial support, and teacher training. Investing in EiE today contributes to a more shock-responsive education system tomorrow.⁶

In emergencies, inclusion must be at the centre. Early learning protects the youngest minds during the most vulnerable moments of their lives. EiE is a central component of humanitarian response and is the best opportunity to build back safer, fairer, and stronger education systems after disaster. As international aid budgets face increasing pressure and global humanitarian needs escalate, sustained and increased investment in EiE programmes which are rooted in and led by the community remains absolutely essential. By prioritizing the education of Myanmar's children today, we ensure no child is left behind.

The Power of Partnerships

World Vision shares the overarching vision and objectives of the global education fund Education Cannot Wait (ECW).⁷ Established in 2016, its aim is to achieve a world where all children and adolescents affected by emergencies and crises can learn free of cost, in safety and without fear. World Vision Myanmar's EiE programme is implemented in partnership with Plan International Myanmar and local organisations Meikwe Myanmar (MM), Ethnic Equality Initiative (EEI) and the Diocesan Commission for Education (DCE). World Vision Myanmar is a key partner of UNICEF in EiE and plays a central role in the Education Cluster of Myanmar.

⁵ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/out-school-children-and-educational-gaps-cost-global-economy-10000-billion-year>

⁶ World Vision is a member of Asia Pacific Coalition for Safe School (APCSS) and support the implementation of the Global Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030. This framework provides guides and offers an all-hazard approach to resilience and safety in the education sector.

⁷ <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/>

Case Studies:

My name is Chit Poo, I am a 12-year-old Grade 4 student. I have three siblings and I'm the eldest. Although school has reopened this academic year, teachers are not teaching in the schools, and students do not wear school uniforms. Instead, teaching takes place in the monastery where the Reading Club is located. I attend the Reading Club activity and it has significantly improved my life. There are 82 students in our club. Through this activity, I have learned songs, poems, and listened to many stories. I now read short texts confidently and understand how to connect vocabulary. My fear of speaking in public has reduced, and I can participate confidently in school events. I have completed one year in the Reading Club. At the end of the year, the educators and education committee organized competitions such as storytelling, singing, and drawing. I won second prize among 82 students. In the competition, I participated wearing my school uniform, which I love to wear. I even received a prize thanks to the support of the Reading Club, which has motivated me even more.



Naw Win, a 5-year-old child enrolled with the early childhood education sessions in 2023. Her family relies on farming for their livelihood and has limited financial resources, which made it difficult to prioritize education, "I feel happy when I go to the ECE sessions. I like drawing pictures and singing songs with my friends." Naw's mother said, "I am grateful for the support my child received. This project has made a real difference in her life, and we are thankful for the opportunity."

Ma Nar is a 9-year-old girl who dreams of becoming a teacher. However, her education opportunities have been limited due to the absence of a school in her village, forcing her to attend school in another village. This arrangement was disrupted when political instability led to the closure of the school she had been attending. In June 2023, Ma Nar was enrolled as a Grade I student in the government primary school, but unfortunately, the school closed after only one month of attendance. Ma Nar has five siblings, and her parents work in farming to support the family. She often had to take care of her younger siblings while her parents were working. Ma Nar joined the ECW Reading Club in January 2024, *"Now, I enjoy reading and making new friends. I feel more confident when I speak, and I can even help my teacher during reading club sessions."*



World Vision asks donors, governments, and multilateral agencies to:



Increase Official Development Assistance commitments to at least 0.7% of GNI.



Ensure Education in Emergencies is integrated into humanitarian response plans and recovery strategies.



To ringfence at least 15% of overall ODA budgets for education and at least 10% of humanitarian finance to Education in Emergencies.



Increase multi-year, flexible funding for Education in Emergencies in Myanmar.



Increase spending on education by the government of Myanmar to 20% of its national budget to education.



Fully fund the UN Humanitarian Response plan for Myanmar.



Support local actors and communities delivering education services in conflict zones.

