

Conflict, Peace, and the Political Economy of Education in Myanmar

Sa Phyo Arkar Myo Hlaing

Abstract

This paper examines historical political economies, from the pre-colonial era through to the quasi-civilian government of the 2010s, that shape Myanmar's education sector. In line with critical political economy literature, we situate education provision within broader endogenous and exogenous security, economic, political and social structures. The paper draws on a rigorous desk review and key informant interviews, applying conflict-related development analysis (DFID, 2002; Pherali, 2022) to map dynamics historically driving the diversity, fragmentation, contestation, and struggle within the education sector. In doing so, we demonstrate how education plays multiple, often contradictory roles, acting simultaneously as victim, perpetrator, liberator, and potential peacebuilder (Pherali, 2022). We situate our analysis around key historical legacies and ultimately reflect upon the ways in which education remains implicated in Myanmar's protracted conflict and crisis.