

Educating in Conflict: The Impact on Teacher Well-Being in Myanmar's Community Colleges

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Abstract

This study examines the lived experiences of teachers working in two non-state community colleges in conflict-affected regions of Chin and Mon States in post-coup Myanmar. Drawing on Falk et al.'s (2019) ecological framework, adapted for Myanmar's unique socio-political context, it explores how factors at the individual, home and school, community, and national levels intersect to shape teacher wellbeing. Using a qualitative case study design and semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators, the research uncovers the profound challenges teachers face, including physical insecurity, gendered caregiving burdens, inadequate salaries, limited access to professional development, infrastructural deficits, and lack of psychosocial support. At the same time, it reveals teachers' remarkable resilience, much of which is grounded in community support, through informal coping strategies, strong peer networks, and a shared commitment to sustaining education at the local level.

Beyond highlighting the inadequacy of narrow, individual-level interventions, the study demonstrates the urgent need for multi-layered, context-responsive strategies that address both material and psychosocial dimensions of teacher wellbeing. It contributes new insights into under-researched teacher populations operating outside formal state systems, and offers contextually grounded recommendations for donors, policymakers, and educational practitioners seeking to support teacher resilience in protracted crisis settings. In doing so, it advances theoretical understandings of teacher wellbeing by centering the voices of educators navigating the intersections of conflict, displacement, and community-driven education.