

Alternative Pedagogies, Social Emotional Learning, and Mentorship for Displaced Myanmar Youth: Weaving Well-Mentored Futures of Homegrown Hope

Niang Sian Lawh Lun and Pone Nyet Aung

Abstract

Myanmar's educational landscape has long been dominated by authoritarian, examination-centered rote instruction that rewards passive compliance and penalizes independent critical inquiry. Following the compounding disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 military coup, ongoing civil war, and severe natural disasters, this traditional educational infrastructure has largely fractured, forcing thousands of marginalized and ethnic minority youth into legal precarity and geographical displacement along borders like Mae Sot, Thailand, or deep digital isolation within ethnic regions, such as Chin State. This paper synthesizes findings from three grassroots educational initiatives developed by Parami University students: Weaving Futures, Homegrown Hope, and specialized Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Frameworks in Migrant Learning Centers (MLCs). This paper argues that alternative pedagogical models can successfully catalyze a transition from passive rote-based education toward radical, transformative learning. Grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, we demonstrate that structured virtual mentorship, informal relational accompaniment, and trauma-informed emotional regulation practices collectively nurture academic clarity, build crucial bridging social capital, and foster psychological resilience among highly vulnerable student cohorts. Ultimately, this paper highlights that educational transformation for marginalized youth cannot wait for political and institutional stabilization; rather, it is forged presently through decentralized, care-centered solidarity spaces that redefine agency and hope amidst ongoing conflict.