# Management Response

**Program Name** Strengthening pre-service Teacher Education in Myanmar

**Period - April 2018** June 2020 (Phase 2)

**Total Aust. Funding** $3 million (AUD)

**Implementing Partner** UNESCO, in partnership with the Ministry of Education

**Country / Sector** Myanmar / Education

## Overview

The Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Phase 2 (January 2017 – June 2020) program aims to improve Myanmar's pre-service teacher education system through policy and institutional capacity development in Myanmar's 25 Teacher Education Colleges (ECs). STEM Phase 2 is implemented in partnership between the Myanmar Ministry of Education (MoE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) with financing from three bilateral donors: Finland (AUD $5.7m), Australia (AUD $3m) and the United Kingdom (AUD $1.4m).

The completion and recommendations from the STEM project mid-term Evaluation come at a time when UNESCO is developing Phase 3 of the project, to begin in mid-2020. While most Phase 2 MTE recommendations were addressed in 2019 and early 2020, many will be incorporated in the design of STEM Phase 3. Australia’s funding contribution to STEM concludes at the end of Phase 2. We are currently considering possible funding support to Phase 3.

DFAT extends thanks to the Ministry of Education for their support for and input into the Evaluation. DFAT acknowledges the significant amount of work that has taken place since the establishment of Phase 2 in 2017. DFAT also thanks UNESCO and the authors of the Evaluation at Oxford Policy Management. The program updates provided in UNESCO’s Management Response are a useful annex to the Evaluation and provide important additional context for the reader. <https://bangkok.unesco.org/index.php/content/strengthening-pre-service-teacher-education-myanmar-stem-project-%E2%80%93-mid-term-evaluation>

## Summary of management response

STEM as an important contribution to the implementation of Myanmar’s National Education Strategic Plan (NESP). The Evaluation comments on the significance of the work completed to date. The findings identify key outputs likely to lead to expected outcomes, analyse the enabling factors and obstacles, and scrutinise the challenges encountered and their causes. It further assess to what extent STEM’s monitoring and evaluation tools are able to effectively identify achievements and challenges, as well as what remedial actions have been or can possibly be taken to address challenges.

The findings of the Evaluation are a useful insight into program implementation at a point in time. DFAT welcomes the majority of the recommendations as tangible steps to improve implementation under Phase 2, and inform Phase 3 design and development. DFAT has accepted all recommendations; recommendations 2c, 3 and 9c have been partially accepted.

### Effectiveness

DFAT welcomes the finding that STEM’s support for MoE policy development, such as the Teacher Competency Standards Framework (TCSF), will result in teacher policy that is better grounded in evidence and aligned to international standards.

DFAT agrees with the Evaluation’s emphasis on the importance of the TCSF being a living document that is regularly updated and that it is counter-productive to strive for the perfect framework. It is important to keep sight of the immediate benefits of a well-formed, even if not perfect, expression of what good teaching practice looks like.

DFAT accepts concerns raised regarding challenges of TCSF implementation. DFAT acknowledges that implementation challenges have delayed TSCF finalisation and led to increased activity costs. The lessons learnt from the development of the beginning level TCSF will expedite the development of further levels of TCSF for more experienced teachers, to begin in 2020. It is important that critical policy changes like the TCSF are able to be practically implemented.

DFAT is concerned by Evaluation findings about the lack of progress in supporting the MoE to address critical teacher educator capacity gaps. We appreciate, however, the benefits to sustainability of a participatory and consultative capacity development processes. We agree with the finding that from a longer-term perspective, the project’s approach to government capacity development and ownership is likely to improve the prospects for achieving STEM outcomes.

### Relevance

DFAT welcomes the Evaluation’s findings under relevance. STEM is clearly well-aligned to national priorities on pre-service teacher education. This is seen both in the delivery of key outputs stated in MoE policy, as well as other activities (such as on Information and Communications Technology) that are not as strongly emphasised in MoE policy but identified as essential by Education Colleges (ECs).

DFAT welcomes the Evaluation’s emphasis on the need to better prepare ECs for the implementation of the upgraded degree course. STEM is supporting the Ministry of Education’s Department of Higher Education (DHE) to discuss implementation of the reform and the necessary steps to take with EC Principals. It will be important for STEM to work with DHE to develop a clear action plan and milestones for implementation of Year 1 of the reform. DFAT agrees it will take time to build capacity at EC level.

### Efficiency

DFAT agrees that STEM’s costs appear proportionate to its outputs to date, but Value for Money (VfM) analysis should be strengthened to ensure STEM donors can identify to what extent procured inputs are economical, the efficiency of STEM in converting inputs to outputs, and to what extent the inputs effectively lead to the intended STEM project outcomes. The current structure of UNESCO’s financial management of STEM limits the project’s ability to do this effectively. In collaboration with the MoE and other STEM donors, through the Steering Committee, DFAT will work to ensure STEM VfM indicators are revised ahead of the Phase 2 Final Evaluation Report.

DFAT welcomes the Evaluation finding that STEM’s model of partnership with the MoE is highly appropriate and that program co-ordination with stakeholders, including the MoE and STEM donors, has been proactive. We note there have been challenges in integrating the work of the other related development partner programs.

DFAT agrees that STEM’s modalities are generally appropriate but unclear roles and communication with the curriculum contractor have resulted in some inefficiencies.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

DFAT agrees that STEM’s Results Matrix captures activities and outputs comprehensively, but the outcome level of its Theory of Change (ToC) is not well articulated. This is likely to limit effective strategic review of project performance. Making explicit the intended outcomes, and the assumptions these rest upon, will enable more effective strategic review of progress towards those outcomes and of which approaches are and are not working. STEM should undergo a full review and revision of its ToC.

DFAT is concerned with the finding that STEM lacks an operational Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plan. Without an operation MEL plan, progress towards outcomes will not be not adequately measured to enable well-evidenced strategic review of effectiveness.

STEM should develop a revised MEL Plan based on the revised ToC.

### Sustainability

DFAT welcomes the finding that MoE’s ownership of STEM and STEM’s capacity development approach provide strong prospects for the sustainability of much of STEM’s work. DFAT agrees that the long-term impact of STEM rests on some key assumptions both beyond and within STEM’s control, including MoE capacity and incentives for teacher educators and teachers to develop new competencies.

DFAT notes the finding that limited progress in addressing the status of primary school teaching is a threat to sustainability. The relatively lower status of primary teachers may mean that teachers trained in new approaches do not remain primary teachers for long. We agree that addressing this issue through development and implementation of new teacher policy is critical to the enduring impact of the teacher education curriculum reform.

### Impact

DFAT agrees that, institutionally, STEM’s work to support the Ministry on policy reform is laying the groundwork for institutional change. DFAT welcomes the finding that at the individual level, STEM has had a strong impact on the limited population engaged through the Curriculum Core Team (CCT) and that all ECs have benefitted from strengthened ICT capacity for administration and teaching. DFAT notes evidence of impact across the broader teacher educator population is weak. The need for improved evidence should be considered and strengthened when revising the STEM Phase 2 MEL.

DFAT agrees that STEM has supported the MoE in progress towards critical institutional (policy) changes, but these have not yet been realised and so impact cannot yet be claimed for these. STEM’s work on policy reform is a work in progress.

### Inclusive education

DFAT welcomes the finding that STEM has supported some inclusive education concepts to be embedded into new policies and that there has been a positive improvement in the awareness of inclusive education terminology among STEM stakeholders, such as EC principles.

DFAT agrees that the majority of STEM inclusive education inputs, such as training and capacity development workshops, are often limited in scope and sometimes inconsistent. STEM should consider and address this, including confirmation of the content of inclusion in education (e.g. considering gender/sex, ethno-linguistic, disability etc.), and ways to improve data disaggregation, when revising the STEM Phase 2 ToC and MEL.

DFAT agrees that that disability inclusion is not sufficiently mainstreamed in STEM activities. DFAT notes with some concern the evaluation team’s reports of problematic attitudes toward student teachers with disabilities in the ECs visited. DFAT agrees that awareness training targeted specifically toward EC principals and management would be a well warranted first measure in addressing discriminatory behaviour and provide practical steps toward better inclusion for teacher educators and student teachers.

STEM should take steps to ensure all student teachers graduating from ECs have completed some sensitisation training on supporting children with disabilities to achieve in classrooms. It is likely that even though Myanmar is supporting a policy of specialist, separate education for children with disabilities, there will be learner diversity and students in the classroom with disabilities. It would be useful for STEM to identify further opportunities for strengthening disability inclusion competencies within the TCSF, and thereby also supporting Myanmar’s transition to a dual or inclusive education approach.

| **No** | **MTE Recommendation** | **DFAT Response** | **Note** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | STEM to support the MoE to generate and use a working version of the TCSF, as it pertains to the beginning teacher emerging from the new EC degree program | Accepted | The beginning level TCSF is expected to be finalised in early 2020 and subsequent levels of the TCSF will be developed beginning in 2020. The draft beginning level TCSF is already being used to inform the teacher education reform. |
| 2 | 2a. Urgently discuss with the DDG of DHE the possibility of providing additional units of resource in her office, based in NPT, to assist work planning and prepare for the EC degree program  2b. Appoint a STEM/MoE Communications Officer to support EC preparations and roll out of the new degree course – a Myanmar language speaker  2c. STEM supports MoE to co-ordinate each EC’s creation and delivery of an action plan covering the next six months of preparation for the new program. | 2a and 2b are accepted  2c is partially accepted. | STEM will discuss the possibility of assigning staff to support DHE teacher education and training in Naypyidaw with the Deputy Director General; however, this is the decision of DHE.  An international consultant supported development of a communications strategy and communications products in interim and a national consultant for communications will join the STEM project team in October 2019.  STEM is supporting DHE to discuss implementation of the reform and the necessary steps to take with EC Principals, and STEM worked with DHE to develop an action plan and milestones for implementation of Year 1 of the reform. However, it will take time to build capacity at EC level to take a lead role in implementation and therefore DHE will continue to have a role in coordination of the reform effort. |
| 3 | Strengthen STEM’s senior-level engagement, for example with the appointment of a senior education adviser. | This recommendation is partially accepted. | Senior-level engagement already takes place regularly but will be strengthened with a more strategic engagement plan. Frequent discussions occur between the STEM Senior Project Officer and the DDG leading pre-service teacher education reform, and the UNESCO Head of Office regularly meets with the DG of DHE and the Minister of Education. Further, recognising the importance of human resources for the success of STEM, staffing will be increased and roles upgraded so that STEM project leadership can dedicate more time to working with DHE officials. |
| 4 | STEM/MoE to recognise the important skill-set of the CCT cadre in the new EC program, identifying developmental roles for them within each EC, and reflect the intended outcomes of STEM’s support to the CCT in the Results Matrix | Accepted | STEM in consultation with DHE is looking at strengthening and clarifying the role of CCT members. They will support implementation of the Year 1 curriculum, and continue to be increasingly independent in the development of EC curriculum for Years 2 to 4.  The role of CCT members in achieving STEM outputs and outcomes will be made explicit in the revised STEM Results Matrix. |
| 5 | STEM/MoE to ensure implementation of the comprehensive professional development plan for all teacher educators in ECs receives sufficient priority, so that teacher educators’ capacity to deliver the new course is not left neglected in favour of the more visible aspects of EC preparation | Accepted | The development of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for teacher educators will commence in September 2019. Prior to the launch of the Year 1 EC curriculum in December 2019, all teacher educators will receive trainings to orient them to the new curriculum and practice the pedagogy required to deliver it. |
| 6 | 6a. STEM to ensure the Years 2-4 curriculum development process includes consultation with basic education subject authors and other actors in curriculum before developing first drafts  6b. Further clarify roles and lines of communication between all actors in curriculum development, particularly for curriculum development contractor(s)  6c. Clarify role and required use of CREATE’s (The project for Curriculum Reform at Primary Level of Basic Education in Myanmar) Teacher Education materials | Accepted | STEM has been communicating closely with basic education authors regarding development of and their involvement in the Year 2 curriculum. The authors are attending CCT meetings for development of the syllabi, which precede development of the student teacher textbooks and teacher educator guides.  STEM has recruited curriculum coordinators for different subjects to ensure sufficient human resources exist within the project team to address coordination of various stakeholders, and especially external stakeholder involvement with CCT. Additionally, meetings to clarify roles among stakeholders are being held earlier during Year 2 curriculum development, during the syllabi drafting stage. STEM continues to be in close communication with the CREATE team; however, they will have a limited role in Year 2 curriculum development given its focus on lower secondary education. STEM is already working closely with the EYE project and Department of Education, Research, Planning and Training (DERPT) curriculum development team for alignment of the Year 2 curriculum with the new lower secondary education curriculum, and will continue working with Equipping Youth for Employment (EYE) project, CREATE, and DERPT teams for Years 3-4 curriculum development. |
| 7 | Identify STEM’s intended changes (outcomes), reflect these in results matrix (with an appropriate measurement plan). Develop an operational MEL plan. | Accepted | STEM is undergoing a full review and revision of its theory of change, and will develop a Results Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan based on the revised theory of change |
| 8 | Define and agree Value for Money indicators | Accepted | Initial work on Value for Money indicators will take place during Phase 2, and a full set of Value for Money indicators will be developed and integrated into the next phase of the STEM project, commencing in 2020 |
| 9 | Inclusive Education Recommendations: Disability  a. STEM to support inclusion of explicit mention of disability inclusion in the TCSF  b. Develop Special Education Needs (SEN)/disability awareness training for EC management  c. Provide pathways & learning opportunities for educators wishing to specialise in SEN  d. STEM to support greater emphasis on SEN in the curriculum | a., b., and d. are accepted  c. is partially accepted. | While the current indicators for the beginning level TCSF already mention supporting students with different abilities, learning difficulties, and special needs, STEM will identify opportunities to strengthen competency standards and indicators that advance disability inclusion  A CPD Framework for EC management will be developed beginning September 2019, and STEM will work with the Towards Results in Education and English (TREE) project to ensure inclusion is mainstreamed, including disability inclusion. This will be the basis for the delivery of professional development on disability inclusion.  STEM will take steps to ensure all student teachers graduating from ECs have received training on supporting children with disabilities to achieve in classrooms; however, specialisation in SEN should be carefully considered so it does not encourage a segregated education system.  STEM will strengthen both direct teaching and mainstreaming of inclusive education, including SEN, in the Years 2-4 curriculum. This will be supported by an external expert review of inclusive education in the curriculum for all years of the new EC curriculum. |
| 10 | Inclusive Education Recommendations: Ethno-Linguistic Inclusion  a. Develop practical strategies in the curriculum for teaching students whose mother tongue is not Myanmar language, such as introductions to speech/second language acquisition among children and on speech impediments  b. Strengthen institutional capacity to support language diversity | Accepted | STEM will strengthen existing content on second language instruction in the Myanmar and Local Curriculum subjects in the Years 2-4 curriculum, and will include information on speech impediments within its curriculum for literacy instruction.  The launch of Education Management Information System (EMIS) for use in Education Colleges is secluded for late 2020. EMIS will support collection of student teacher data disaggregated by language and ethnicity, providing information to support language diversity. In the interim, an assessment of equity and inclusion in pre-service teacher education will attempt to identify baselines and recommendations to strengthen language diversity. |
| 11 | Inclusive Education Recommendations: Gender  Expand and coordinate gender mainstreaming | Accepted | STEM will develop and deliver a module on gender mainstreaming for all ECs, with practical content on avoiding gender bias in classroom management and teaching techniques. Ensuring gender sensitivity (and the avoidance of gender stereotypes and bias in materials) in the new EC curriculum will continue. |
| 12 | Inclusive Education Recommendations: Communications  Create a coordinated communication strategy between CCT and ECs to influence transfer of knowledge and attitudes | Accepted | As part of an overall strategy to clarify and strengthen the role of CCT members and their key role in the EC reform, STEM will work with DHE to ensure strengthened knowledge and attitudes for inclusion among the CCT is more likely to be transferred to others in their ECs. |