

Education in Rakhine: Next Steps for the Sector

Summary report based on the education and conflict assessment
conducted in Sittwe and Pauk Taw Township, September 2013

1. Executive summary

Assessment aim

The aim of the education and conflict assessment conducted by Save the Children in Rakhine (Sittwe and Pauk Taw) in September 2013 was to explore the interaction between education and the inter-communal conflict in order to establish a) how external support for education programme strategy and implementation can do harm and how to avoid this, b) how education programmes can contribute to the longer-term process of peace and stability (acknowledging that peaceful co-existence rather than re-integration may be the best hope in the short-medium term). The drive behind the assessment was twofold: recognition that in the absence of a sectoral conflict analysis the emergency education¹ interventions underway had the potential to do harm; acknowledgment of the need for the sector to depart from needs-based planning and develop a more strategic approach to programming in this complex context.

Education and conflict

Education, or lack of it, can be an underlying source of conflict, but it can also play an important role in the process of peace-building and reconciliation as it helps shape attitudes, behaviours and build social capital. In this way education can contribute to reducing inequalities, overcoming prejudices and building new social values and institutions². Whilst this is a long-term process requiring a sustained commitment in terms of presence and funding (so lending itself to development programming), the potential contribution that initial and short-term education responses can make (including humanitarian) should not be missed and can be used to lay the foundations for the recovery phase initiatives. The potential harm that conflict *insensitive* education strategy and programme can do in a fragile and volatile context should not be underestimated and efforts to avoid this must be made.

Education and conflict in Rakhine

¹ In the Rakhine context 'emergency education' comprises the following: temporary learning spaces, volunteer teachers, two hours of classes only per day (only two subjects: Myanmar language and Mathematics) and basic teaching and learning materials – the minimum education package.

² Tschirgi, N. (2011) 'Conflict, Education & Peace-building – Converging Perspectives' in Conflict and Education journal, University of San Diego.

The findings from the assessment support the assertion of other conflict assessments³ that education played a role in the conflict in Rakhine State. As a root cause of the conflict, the education system was part of the strategy of centre-periphery ethno-politics employed by the regime to minimize potential threats from the peripheral ethnic states⁴. This strategy is based on the premise that the legitimization of one group relies on its comparative status to other groups. In this case this deflects attention away from the Rakhine community's relative socio-economic disadvantage nationally by their relative advantage over the Muslim populations within Rakhine State. The three-tier horizontal inequalities which resulted (Centre vs. Rakhine vs. Muslim), in education as well as generally, frustrated the development of a workable social contract and significantly reduced chances of social cohesion.

As a conflict driver, poor or lack of education left a large group of un- or under-educated young people highly susceptible to the machinations of the 'ethnic mobilisers'⁵. As a driver education also failed to equip many from both communities to resist the barrage of propaganda that new media openness and technology enabled and which played an important role in the violence. As a driver formal education provided the forum for discrimination and humiliation which reinforced the superiority of the dominant group and the inferiority of the other, helping justify the violence and the 'need' for the resultant segregation.

This is the negative face of education, but the opposite of all the above and is also possible. The task and challenge for all parties working in Education in Rakhine is to identify strategies and programmes which can contribute to revealing this positive face - education which reduces inequalities, strengthens the social contract, imparts critical thinking and life-skills, and offers opportunity and hope for a more peaceful future.

The challenge

The challenge is considerable given the ease with which it is to do harm in the highly sensitive and volatile context of Rakhine, and in the face of overt opposition from much of the ethnic Rakhine community to any attempts at reconciliation and re-integration. The option of resuming life (and education) as it was before seems not to exist, and fear of doing harm through supporting the wrong policy, strategy or programme is arguably why the Education sector finds itself in its current state of limbo – attempting to provide rights-based temporary emergency education, being pressured by the needs on the ground to offer more than this (and thus unwittingly supporting incremental

³ 'Conflict Assessment on Rakhine State', Josefine Roos, March 2013; Final Report of Inquiry Commission on Sectarian Violence in Rakhine State', Republic of the Union of Myanmar, April 2013; 'Conflict Analysis of Rakhine State, Myanmar', United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, February 2013.

⁴ Roos, J. (2013) 'Conflict Research in Rakhine State', Danish Refugee Council, Yangon, Myanmar.

⁵ Bush, K. & Saltarelli, D. (2000) 'The two faces of education in ethnic conflict; towards a peace-building education for children' UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy.

entrenchment of segregation) and yet without a clear strategy for the next phase to guide it through this. It is for these reasons that the assessment was conducted.

Strategic options

The priority, and first step in overcoming this state, is strategically engaging with the issue of segregation and entrenchment. For the Education sector (as well as others) to do this, general assumptions have to be made regarding the most likely course for the camps in the short term (2 years). Regardless of political developments on the issue of segregation, it seems unlikely that the situation on the ground will radically change in the short term, particularly given the gradual transition towards semi-permanence in terms of infrastructure and administrative systems (now being formalised). Based on this the strategic options for supporting formal education are limited:

- Continue providing the limited package of emergency education in its current form only;
- Support transition to a semi-formal system in the camp (expanded but not full curriculum, links with formal system but not government run, alternative/semi-linked certification, dependent on international support);
- Support the establishment of a formal system in the camps (full curriculum, government led and run although still internationally supported, full certification and links to external education institutions, e.g. universities);
- Disengage from supporting any form of 'formal' education (and hand over responsibility to the Government);

Or a combination of these based on a clear and coherent strategy;

Plus a range of non-formal education interventions and ECCD (not within the Government's existing purview but with potential to make important contributions to building the peace).

All of the above options must be analysed with regards to their impact on the following: a) promoting and sustaining segregation and international organisation complicity in this; b) supporting or undermining government capacity and will to respond and the impact of this on their relationships with the communities; c) international organisation relationships *with* the communities and impact of their support on the relationships *between* the communities.

Strategic considerations

In deciding strategy and identifying programmatic interventions there are two obvious but key conclusions to work (back) from and which underlay analysis:

- a) Social cohesion - the ability of a community to withstand external shocks without turning on itself⁶ - has severely failed in Rakhine, demonstrated by the level of violence and opposition to reconciliation;

⁶ Heyneman, S. P. (2008) 'Education, Social Cohesion and Ideology' in Right to Education: Policies and Perspectives, Karip, E. (2008) Turkish Education Association, Ankara, Turkey.

- b) The social contract - the voluntary agreement between individuals, groups and the community and/or government which secures mutual protection and welfare and regulates the relations among its members⁷ - is very fragile, evidenced by the current level of disaffection with the Government from both communities.

For these reason, efforts at direct reconciliation and re-integration of the Rakhine and the Muslim communities is premature. In the face of this seeming intractability it is easy for a sense of paralysis to take hold. Yet arguably there are ways, even at this early stage, that education sector programmes can help lay the foundations for more targeted and pro-active peace-building interventions at a later stage, for both education and broader initiatives.

It may not be feasible to work on the relationships between the communities - the 'bridging social capital'⁸ - but, as a first step (in addition to ensuring do no harm), supporting the improvement of the relationships *within* the communities - the 'bonding social capital'⁹ - is an option. This has the potential to prevent the radicalization of the sections within both communities which are instrumental in the violence and which the moderates in both communities struggle to contain.

A potentially important contribution to re-building the social contract is to adopt a strategy which promotes the re-establishment of the relationship between the Muslim communities and the Government and simultaneously strengthens the relationship between the Rakhine communities and the Government - the assessment identified that the central Government's relationship with both to be near breaking point or weak. Education is a powerful structural tool for altering social contradictions and, as such, is 'the single most important policy lever for any government to increase social cohesion' (Kotite, 2012)¹⁰. Strengthening the relationship between the Government and the communities (part of the social contract) also strengthens its ability to predict, prevent and contain further episodes of violence.

Government position

The Government of Myanmar is currently not using this lever despite recognising the role of education in the conflict - its link to violence and extremism and the prevention of both. This recognition is evident in the Rakhine Commission Inquiry Report's recommendations which include the need for education curriculum review, a focus on promoting Myanmar literacy, human rights and peaceful co-existence and

⁷ Addison, T. & Murshed, S. (2006) 'The social contract and violent conflict' in Civil War, Civil Peace, The Open University, Milton Keynes.

⁸ 'Bridging social capital': the sense of trust which develops between different social groups based on experience of and communication between them, the more heterogeneous the more bridging social capital is developed.

⁹ 'Bonding social capital': the internal sense of bonding which individuals of the same or similar groups feel (ethnic, linguistic, religious).

¹⁰ Kotite, P. (2012), Education for conflict prevention and peace-building: Meeting the challenges of the 21st Century, International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), UNESCO, Paris.

‘public education’ (counter-propaganda campaigns and rumour management). The Government is providing some education support to the Muslim IDP camps in the form of some temporary learning spaces, a limited budget for hiring volunteer teachers and the provision of some textbooks. However, this level of engagement is insufficient and is more in line with its general approach to the situation in Rakhine which appears to be one of non-decision and minimal action – no Government plan or strategy for dealing with the conflict in Rakhine has been released. However, this does not mean that a coherent and persuasive strategic approach (including advocacy) cannot shift this position to one more favourable to all parties, those providing as well as receiving education, as the recommendations below outline.

Strategic recommendations

Therefore, in the post-emergency education phase (from June 2014), based on the assumption that the vast majority Muslim IDP camps will remain in the short-term (2 years), international agencies should do the following:

- Strongly advocate for the Government to act on its responsibility for the provision of *formal* education (both in the TLS and the pre-existing community schools), particularly the hard and more visible components of it (structures and furniture, teachers, textbooks)
- Focus their limited resources and expertise on the ‘softer’ aspects which have the potential to add most value to the process of laying the foundations for building the peace, or at least for peaceful co-existence.

This not only supports the re-establishment of the relationship between the Government and the Muslim community but also reduces the complicity of the international community in the gradual process of entrenching the segregation which is currently underway. It also allows international organisations to move away from being or becoming the formal service provider and hand over the responsibility and the services already established (TLS and teachers) to the Government. In turn this frees international organisations to focus on working to qualitatively improve these services (albeit in a way which boosts Government credibility and legitimacy – a key aspect of the strengthening the social contract). Simultaneously international organisations should invest in services and activities which can support other short and long-term social and economic aspects of peace-building, such as youth and early childhood education (ECCD), though both humanitarian and development actors and funding mechanisms.

Such an approach would require a serious commitment from the Government, beyond that currently provided. However, a clear and coherent strategic framework which supports the Government as primary duty bearer and magnifies its impact through qualitative support and additional interventions could prove a more palatable package, even given the reticence to engage in the issue in the run up to the 2015 elections. The alternatives to this are for international organisations to continue as the primary providers of education in the Muslim IDP camps, which is neither feasible nor attractive given the resource limitations and dangers of creating an autonomous parallel education system. The option of withdrawing educational support could be justified from a ‘do no harm’ perspective and could potentially be used to leverage a commitment from the Government. However, the implications of

doing this also have to be carefully assessed and using this as a window of opportunity to help establish a 'positive peace' instead of a negative one¹¹ should not be passed up. Additionally, in engaging with this dilemma it must also be remembered that 'it is a moral and logical fallacy to conclude that because aid can do harm, a decision not to give aid would do no harm' (Anderson, 1999)¹².

Reality check

Regardless of the strategy and programmes selected, ultimately Education on its own cannot be expected to resolve identity-based violent conflicts, but it can play a key role in a holistic, long term and multi-leveled strategy to work on conflict. Maintaining realistic expectations in this complex and networked context is important; even if 'the most we can do is create the conditions where conflict in the future may be marginally less likely' (Davies, 2013)¹³ this is still a worthy endeavour.

The following is only a summary of the assessment and includes an overview of the methodology and the key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The full report includes more background and detail, including a summary of the general root causes, drivers and triggers of the inter-communal conflict in Rakhine and more information on education in Myanmar and Rakhine.

¹¹ Galtung, J. (1976) 'Three approaches to peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace-building' in Peace, War and Defence: Essays in peace research, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo.

¹² Anderson, M. B. (1999) Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War', Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner.

¹³ Davies, L. (2013) 'Education Change and Peace-building' FriEnt Working Group on peace and development.

Methodology

The boundary of enquiry was the communities where Save the Children currently works in Sittwe and Pauk Taw townships directly affected through violence and displacement. Information was gathered by enumerators trained in Do No Harm and the assessment tools from the key and group informants listed below in order to capture the different experiences and perspectives within the communities and between the (conflicting) communities.

- Informant groups: Camp/community leaders, children, youth (male and female disaggregated) parents, teachers (where exist) in both Rakhine and Muslim communities.
- Key informants: Rakhine government offices, Rakhine NGOs, Rakhine Monks.

DATE	LOCATION	TOWNSHIP & AREA	TYPOLOGY	ETHNICITY / RELIGION
2-Sep	Thet Kel Pyin	Sittwe - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim
	Baw Du Pa	Sittwe - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim
	Ohn Taw Gyi 4	Sittwe - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim
	Set Yoe Kya	Sittwe - Urban	IDP Settlement	Rakhine / Buddhist
	Balloon Kwin + Done Tite Kwin	Sittwe - Urban	IDP Settlement	Rakhine / Buddhist
3-Sep	Thet Kel Pyin	Sittwe - Rural	Host Community (village)	Rohingya / Muslim
	Baw Du Pa	Sittwe - Rural	Host Community (village)	Rohingya / Muslim
	Ohn Taw Gyi	Sittwe - Rural	Host Community (village)	Rohingya / Muslim
	Mingan + Moe Lay Watha + Set Yone Su	Sittwe - Urban	IDP Settlement	Rakhine / Buddhist
4-Sep	Sin Tet Maw	Pauk Taw - Rural	IDP Camp	Kaman / Muslim
	Sin Tet Maw	Pauk Taw - Urban	Host Community (village)	Rakhine / Buddhist
	Ohn Taw Gyi 3	Sittwe - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim
5-Sep	Basara	Sittwe - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim
	Basara	Sittwe - Rural	Host Community (village)	Rohingya / Muslim
6-Sep	Ywar Thar Yar	Sittwe - Urban	Host Community (village)	Rakhine / Buddhist
	Hmanzi 2	Sittwe - Rural	Host Community (village)	Rohingya / Muslim
	Kyein Ni Pyin	Pauk Taw - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim
7-Sep	Pauk Taw Urban	Pauk Taw - Urban	IDP Settlement	Rakhine / Buddhist
	Set Yone Su	Sittwe - Urban	Host Community (village)	Maramagyi / Hindu
	Phwe Yar Kone	Sittwe - Rural	IDP Camp	Rohingya / Muslim

The tool used was designed to be structured but flexible and promote free and fluid interaction. The tool involved conducting semi-structured conversations incorporating a timeline and stakeholder mapping activities. As Do No Harm was an important part of the assessment the tools developed for gathering data also needed to speak to this framework which was used in the analysis. The data collection tool and activities were used with all informants except young children (although in different ways). Children were asked to work in groups to draw pictures of their school/educational facilities before, now and how they would like to see it in the future (their dream school).

Note of caution: *This report attempts to capture and present the most salient findings from the assessment based on analysis of the primary data collected in the process described above. In the interest of highlighting some general trends and dynamics between the various actors in Rakhine, generalisations have been made and terms may reflect this. However, it is well understood that the groups are not homogenous and that within the communities there is a wide range of opinions, perspectives and visions.*

Key Findings

General

- Discrimination against the Muslim community steadily increased in the years before the violence possibly linked to the relative softening of the economic superiority of the Rakhine and rise in the living standard of the Muslims (fuelling distrust and perception of takeover).
- The vast majority of the Muslim community want and still hope to go home and resume their former lives peacefully, but few think this will happen in the short-term. The majority of Rakhine did not express an interest in life returning to how it was before - they envisage a life without Muslims (although recognise that the conflict and segregation have made the situation worse economically).
- The issue of citizenship underpins many of the other community dividers and defines the relationship of both communities with the national Government. The divisive issue is likely to be central to the campaigns in the lead up to the 2015 election.
- A common perception amongst the Rakhine is that international aid is now being used to sustain and strengthen (and potentially increase) the Muslim population. However, a related but contrary fear is that insufficient support to the camps will push their grievances towards further violence which also pose a direct threat to the Rakhine community.
- A related common perception amongst many in the Rakhine community is that external actors and interference is as a key part of the intractability of the problem (particularly the OIC).
- Despite the negative economic impact of the conflict and segregation, in line with the disinterest in reconciliation the ethnic Rakhine assessed did not express an interest in renewing business relationships with Muslims. However, business between the two communities has continued/resumed in some areas (despite the initial reprisals) and is likely to grow. The big new economic projects underway or planned in Rakhine have the potential to economically connect or further reinforce the divide between the communities.
- Some educated and influential Rakhine link their perception of Muslim expansion and takeover to the nature and practices of Islam (e.g. large families and polygamy) and now focus their fears on the 'radical' educated mullahs who are seen to be manipulating and controlling the 'uneducated' Muslim communities. This perception was **not** substantiated by this assessment.
- Reports in the Muslim camps of more conservative female clothing (including headwear) and restrictions on movement and activities of females (including school) could be indications of increased conservatism in the Muslim IDP camps which is fuelling the Rakhine community's

perception of radicalisation. However this may be due to increased fear of insecurity in the camps resulting from the breakdown of normal social structures and protection mechanism rather than a renegotiation of cultural norms.

- In additions to restrictions on movements, some Muslim IDPs reported that their containment in the camps is allowing the military and the police to abuse their power through arbitrary detentions and punishment of IDPs.

Education

- Discrimination in education service distribution and provision was reported in many forms and at many levels: Rakhine state as a whole is nationally discriminated against in terms of resource allocations; within Rakhine State the Muslim communities and schools are neglected; Muslims students are systemically barred from certain University subjects (e.g. law, medicine and science) and from certification; in mixed schools Muslim students reported discrimination by Rakhine teachers and students.
- Differences in mother tongue language reinforce the problem of discrimination especially in the mixed schools. Now many Muslim students want to learn Myanmar language rather than Rakhine as they see it as the language of their future in Myanmar. Learning English is also highly desired for the same reason.
- As part of their wish to go home, Muslim parents and children also envisage a return to their previous schools. As part of their general desire *not* to re-integrate, the Rakhine spoken to do not envisage this resumption of mixed-community education as it was before.
- Madrasah religious schools play an important role in communities where there is no school (as is the case now for many) but its influence and educational role is limited to religion and formal schooling is the priority. The popular Rakhine belief that the madrasahs in the camps are preaching hatred of the Rakhine to the Muslim children was **not** substantiated by observations or discussions with the Muslim communities as part of the assessment.
- Parents in both communities generally support education seeing the economic and social benefits. However, parents in both communities expressed their concern at the relevance or use of education in the current context of restricted movement and lack of livelihood opportunities (IDPs) and weak economy and limited livelihoods opportunities (Rakhine).
- Some Muslim teenage girls from urban areas reported more freedom of movement before the conflict, now many are not allowed to leave their longhouse which can also prevent them attending school. This is potentially related to the issue of increasing conservatism in the camps (mentioned above). Some mothers also reported this to be a concern - they want their daughters to go to school.
- Muslim parents and youth demanded equal rights in education with regards matriculation and certification to allow them to go to University and enter the professions previously barred to them (e.g. law, medicine and engineering).

- If return is not an option in the short-term (which many do not think it is), Muslim IDPs want to see education services expanded and improved with regards facilities and quality, and proximity to their current settlements.
- Influential members of the ethnic Rakhine community (monks, local NGO, Rakhine Women's Group) support improving education in the Muslim IDP camps and communities as a way to do three things: a) help contain Muslim community grievances generally (and reduce the risk of them 'rising up'); b) pacify Muslim youth and reduce the influence of the 'radical' mullahs and other mobilisers; c) reduce the Muslim birth-rate through the education of girls and mothers (in the long-term), citing the established link between the two.
- There is a general educational vacuum in Muslim IDP camps, but particularly for the post-primary adolescent and youth age group. Left unaddressed this risks being filled by alternative, potentially less benevolent forms of education and also represents a failure to protect this vulnerable group.

Conclusions

- ***The education sector needs to make planning assumptions and needs to strategically engage with the issue of segregation*** (as well as do no harm in other ways). Based on the assumption that the Muslim IDP camps will remain for the short term at least (2 years) this the strategic options for supporting formal education are limited:
 - Continue providing the limited package of emergency education in its current form only;
 - Support transition to a semi-formal system in the camp (expanded but not full curriculum, links with formal system but not government run, alternative/semi-linked certification, dependent on international support);
 - Support the establishment of a formal system in the camps (full curriculum, government led and run although still internationally supported, full certification and links to external education institutions, e.g. universities);
 - Disengage from supporting any form of 'formal' education (and hand over responsibility to the Government);

Or a combination of these based on a clear and coherent strategy;

Plus a range of non-formal education interventions and ECCD (not within the Government's existing purview but with potential to make important contributions to building the peace).

All of the above options must be analysed with regards to their impact on the following: a) promoting and sustaining segregation and international organisation complicity in this; b) supporting or undermining government capacity and will to respond and the impact of this on their relationships with the communities; c) international organisation relationships *with* the communities and impact of their support on the relationships *between* the communities.

- ***In Rakhine State social cohesion¹⁴ has failed and the social contract¹⁵ is fragile.*** However, given the Muslim community's motivation to return to their former lives, relatively this may be more easily repaired providing the Government upholds its side of the social contract in the future. Education can play a long-term role in rebuilding all aspects of the social contract with both communities based on the non-discriminatory provision of quality services and support.
- ***Rakhine distrust of the international community remains high.*** The needs-based response in the Muslim IDP camp areas has fuelled the perception that the international organisations are only supporting and, in turn, strengthening the Muslim communities. The international community needs to invest significant amounts of time and effort into engaging sincerely and transparently with the Rakhine community through both humanitarian and development programmes and funding, avoiding overtly acceptance-seeking projects which have the potential to back-fire.
- ***Adolescents and youth are particularly vulnerable and need support now.*** Youth are seen idle or gambling; prostitution is reported to be on the rise, as is crime and incidents of conflict between IDP and host communities. This situation represents a significant protection risk for these adolescents and youth, a threat to social cohesion and stability in the camps and a potential force for radicalisation. Elements of this are also true for the ethnic Rakhine youth and this group also require significant targeting by education interventions.
- ***In the Muslim areas the relationship between the Muslim IDPs and the Muslim host communities is under strain*** and has the potential of becoming the next theatre of violent conflict. Religion, tradition and language can be strong connectors between the Muslim host communities and IDPs but this is being undermined by the increasing levels of (unruly) competition between the two groups, with international aid playing a role in this. In addition intra-IDP competition and conflict is also on the increase, usually between IDPs from different areas of Rakhine now living alongside, and adds to this complex and volatile dynamic.

Recommendations

Strategic recommendations

¹⁴ Social cohesion: the ability of a community to withstand external shocks without turning on itself - Heyneman, S. P. (2008) 'Education, Social Cohesion and Ideology' in Right to Education: Policies and Perspectives, Karip, E. (2008) Turkish Education Association, Turkey.

¹⁵ Social contract: the voluntary agreement between individuals, groups and the community and/or government which secures mutual protection and welfare and regulates the relations among its members - Addison, T. & Murshed, S. (2006) 'The social contract and violent conflict' in Civil War, Civil Peace, The Open University, Milton Keynes.

- 1) Use international organisations' education resources to strengthen the framework and lay the groundwork for building the peace and/or promoting peaceful co-existence.** At this time the segregation and the depth of distrust between the Rakhine and the Muslim communities renders direct trust-building interventions (those aimed at developing the 'bridging social capital'¹⁶ aspect of social cohesion) unfeasible. Education sector programmes can help strengthen the framework and lay the groundwork for the later more targeted interventions through the way it supports formal Government services and non-Government services such as NFE (non-formal education) and ECCD (early childhood care and development) all of which have the potential of increasing the 'bonding social capital'¹⁷ aspect – the relationships within the communities.

This can be done by:

- Strongly advocating for the government to act on its responsibility for formal education in the Muslim IDP camps, especially the hard and more visible components of it - school structures (TLS or semi-permanent), teacher recruitment, teaching and learning materials and textbooks, i.e. international organisations disengage from (at least) the hardware support for formal education and promote the visibility of the Government in this area.
 - Re-focusing International organisations' resources and expertise on supporting the government services qualitatively (in doing so magnifying the value of the commitment from the Government) and providing alternative services which have a potentially important role to play in pacification and laying the foundations for future peace-building (in areas where the Government does not traditionally work or lacks capacity e.g. NFE and ECCD).
- 2) Support education programmes which link with and support livelihoods** and economic development. Livelihoods is potentially the most promising 'hard' sector with regards providing real and non-contrived opportunities for the two communities to start interacting again (as is already happening in some areas driven by necessity and profit). Education is arguably the most promising 'soft' sector which can concurrently work on changing behaviour and attitudes in the short-term and long-term (through targeted formal and non-formal education programmes), as well as improving the human capital foundation on which future economic development will be built.
- 3) Think and plan long-term (development) but also act now (humanitarian).** Peace-building and reconciliation does not necessarily mean face-to-face interaction. Direct contact and dialogue

¹⁶ 'Bridging social capital': the sense of trust which develops between different social groups based on experience of and communication between them, the more heterogeneous the more bridging social capital is developed.

¹⁷ 'Bonding social capital': the internal sense of bonding which individuals of the same or similar groups feel (ethnic, linguistic, religious).

can and should take place but only when the time is right and, at the community level at least, this is further along the peace-building path. Premature attempts at direct reconciliation are likely to fail, and could potentially strengthen the resistance to the very idea due to the (poorly) conceived and imposed nature of the intervention.

The multi-levelled and complex task of building trust, strengthening institutions and developing local capacities for peace requires a long-term commitment and funding, not suited to humanitarian programming alone. The strategic and programmatic recommendations posited here focus on what is needed rather than what can be done with the currently-available humanitarian mechanisms and capacity. However, given the dual mandates of the organisations currently employed in supporting education in Rakhine, this shift in focus from short-term emergency education to longer-term qualitative support, NFE and ECCD, should not be problematic providing the funding is made available: flexible humanitarian funding to work on managing the conflict (with a focus on youth in both communities) and development funding to simultaneously start contributing to the process of peace-building.

In addition to this combination of short-term containment and longer-term change, there may also be windows of opportunity in specific areas where education can be used to promote an early recovery in community relations. Although they are likely to be limited, any such opportunities should be seized (albeit conflict sensitively).

- 4) **Provide more support to the Rakhine community**, essential in order to: a) dispel the perception of bias towards the Muslim community and to build acceptance which will support overall programme access and delivery; b) address the education needs which have been exacerbated by or indirectly caused by the conflict but have remained un-noticed and unaddressed; c) support educational development in the Rakhine community as a way of supporting peace in the short and long term: as a pacifier and container of violence and radicalisation; as a potential connector between the communities; as a developer of social and human capital (essential to the long-term development prospects of the State as a whole).
- 5) **Use aid (including education) to strengthen the relationship between the Muslim IDPs and Muslim host communities**: Whilst a certain level of competition is unavoidable in this context of forced settlement and restrictions on movement, great care must be taken to ensure that resource transfers into the area to not generate or fuel conflict between the Muslim IDPs and Muslim host communities. Support to education can and should play a role in this. The resumption of formal education in the (few) formal government schools in the host communities (in the Muslim IDP camp areas) in line with the Rakhine Commission Inquiry recommendations, could be an opportunity to formalise the new temporary schools by linking them to these recognised government institutions. If considered an appropriate approach to formalisation, this should form part of the advocacy strategy.

Programmatic recommendations

- 1) Focused qualitative support to ‘formal/primary education’ in both Rakhine and Muslim communities.** If international organisations withdraw from high levels of hardware support in the camps to focus on soft and qualitative support, this should be on three areas: a) teacher (re)training in both communities to promote the practice of non-discrimination in schools and demonstrating positive values such as tolerance and cooperation and general professional development; b) literacy programme support in line with the Rakhine Inquiry recommendations and the results of the assessment (desire from Muslim communities to improve Myanmar language skills) international organisations can also support literacy boost programmes in the camps and, if necessary, in the Rakhine communities c) PTA establishment and strengthening – providing a voice for parents in education to express their opinions and these can also provide a forum for community engagement in the positive values and behaviours promoted in school. The overall aim of this is to improve the ‘school climate’ in both communities in Rakhine, an important educational contribution to social cohesion.
- 2) Establish Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE) interventions (for post-primary) in both communities.** In the continued absence of formal education opportunities for the post-primary age group adolescent/youth education must form a significant component of future Rakhine education sector strategy. A particular focus on promoting female participation in programmes is also vital as they are the most likely to have missed out on education opportunities to date and are key actors in driving attitude and behavioural change in both communities.
 - a) Accelerated Learning Programmes** (accredited) for children who have missed out on some or all of their formal primary and middle education (NFPE - non-formal primary education).
 - b) Basic and functional literacy:** ensuring that adolescents and youth have the opportunity to achieve basic levels of linguistic and numeric literacy in Myanmar language.
 - c) Life-skills NFE:** for adolescents and youth focusing on understanding and navigating the environment in which they live, including protection risks and human rights. This can also be used as a forum for incorporating sexual and reproductive health education.
 - d) Business development skills:** basic skills (beyond literacy) needed to start a small business - financial literacy, market analysis, business development, budgeting and saving - potentially linked to government micro-credit schemes (as in Rakhine Inquiry recommendations) and/or other organisation’s livelihoods micro-credit schemes.
 - e) Vocational training:** based on market needs and community priorities – linked to local businesses, other organisation’s livelihood programmes and Government-led projects wherever feasible.
- 3) Establish Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes in both communities.** ECCD allows parents (especially mothers) more time for other activities resulting in proven

livelihood-related benefits¹⁸. In addition to the positive contribution ECCD makes to child development, it can promote peaceful behaviour in children at early age preventing youth violence¹⁹ and, some research suggests, also their parents. Overall it has the potential to contribute to substantially to peace-building and social cohesion in the long-term. In addition to allowing parents the time and freedom to pursue livelihoods opportunities, ECCD services can also provide the opportunity for non-formal and parenting education for mothers (or parents) whilst their children are involved in the structured activities and provide a platform for the activities described below (section 4).

- 4) Incorporate Peace Education, Media Literacy and Counter-communication strategies** into all of the above activities (qualitative support to formal education, youth and adolescents activities, ECCD) aiming at developing critical thinking, questioning prejudice, promoting tolerance and resisting the power of the rumour mill (with youth as the immediate priority):
- a) Peace Education** – key and contextually-appropriate components of peace education should be included in above NFE interventions as discrete modules or with key messages integrated into the content and/or methodology of the other curricula.
 - b) Media Literacy** – focusing on enabling the youth to critically analyze their data sources to be able to discriminate better between information and media they are exposed to, and thus make more informed decisions about their actions.
 - c) Counter-communication strategies** – essential in this context of rumour and fear mongering (as recommended by Roos, 2013, p.26). Possibly linked with the use of TV and radio ‘public education’ counter-propaganda campaigns as recommended by the Rakhine Commission Inquiry Report.

Geographical recommendations

Isolated communities and northern Rakhine State (nRS)

Although this assessment, its findings and the resultant recommendations are based on data gathered from the IDP affected areas of Sittwe and Pauk Taw townships, many of the recommendations are applicable to other areas of Rakhine state, including northern Rakhine State. It is feasible that the activities identified for their potential to contribute to managing conflict, promoting peaceful coexistence and rebuilding social cohesion and the social contract would be equally valid for areas which have not/not yet experienced the recent violent upsurges and displacements. This would, of course,

¹⁸ Save the Children (2011) ‘Added value! A study of the impact of ECCD on household incomes and livelihood opportunities’, Marketing Research & Development Co. Ltd, Myanmar.

¹⁹ Tremblay, R. Gervais J. & Petitclerc, A. (2008) ‘Early learning prevents youth violence’, Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, Canada.

need to be based on individual location needs and context emanating from (much needed) education and conflict assessments into these neglected areas.

Advocacy recommendations

Based on the strategic and programmatic options chosen for Rakhine, a multi-levelled advocacy strategy will be needed to mobilize the necessary political and donor support for the strategy and programmes and create the enabling environment for their implementation.

Based on the recommendations made above key advocacy points could include the following:

Advocate the Government of Myanmar to:

1. **Provide a clear plan for education for the Muslim IDPs** (in line with their general strategy and plans for the camps, as yet unreleased) based on the provision of equitable quality inclusive education to all children and youth based on non-discrimination and peaceful co-existence.
2. **Act on their responsibility as primary duty bearer to lead and fund IDP education** (with or without the above-mentioned plan), particularly primary-level and particularly the 'hard' and visible aspects of it - structures, teacher recruitment, training and remuneration. This would allow the funding and support of international organisations to focus more on the qualitative and technical aspects. Highlighting the role of pre-conflict budget allocations for Muslim children's education in funding this is in the short-term may be one strategy for leveraging this.
3. **Formally recognise the training being provided to Muslim volunteer teachers by international organisations** as part of a long-term training programme which results in the formal certification of the Muslim teachers. This is part of the Government assuming more of their responsibility for IDP education (particularly primary level) and in line with the Rakhine Commission Inquiry report which recognises the need for more Muslim teachers, valid whether the camps remain or not. An important part of this process would be promoting and supporting an increase in (or start of) Government involvement in teacher monitoring as well as increasingly supporting the training.
4. **Resume full formal education in the Muslim host community schools** (including those in the Muslim IDP camp areas) as soon as possible, in line with the Rakhine Commission Inquiry recommendations, including the resumption of formal examinations. These listed formal government schools have the potential to act as administrative hubs for the formalisation of certain aspects of the new temporary schools (if this policy is adopted).
5. **Establish examination and certification processes for the IDP children** receiving emergency education in temporary learning spaces in the two subjects being delivered (Mathematics and Myanmar language) starting as soon as possible, but certainly by the 2014 academic year. This could potentially be done through the mechanisms outlined in the above point.
6. **Revert all pre-existing buildings constructed for education purposes in Rakhine State to educational use** and be made suitable for this purpose by the departing users (e.g. security

forces). This is particularly pertinent in the IDP camp areas (such as Myebon) where established formal structures are few but the need for them is currently great.

7. **Rapidly reform the formal education curriculum** (as per Rakhine Commission Inquiry recommendations) to ensure absence of discriminatory or inflammatory content and insert positive and reconciliatory messages of peace, inclusion and gender equality. This could extend to the inclusion of peace education in the formal curriculum, including sections on cultural, ethnic and religious diversity education.
8. **Guarantee equal education resources and rights for Muslim students and teachers**, including access to University and increased number of Muslim teachers in formal teacher training programmes (whether they be confined to the camps or not).
9. **Increase expenditure on education in Rakhine State** as a whole citing its importance in managing the conflict in the short-term and building the peace and driving development in the long-term (and the need to link the two). (Link with UNICEF's advocacy call to dramatically increase social budgeting for children in Myanmar).

Other advocacy:

10. **Advocate to donors for more flexible and longer humanitarian funding and more development funding for Education in Rakhine** citing its importance in managing the conflict in the short-term and building the peace and driving development in the long-term (and the need to link the two). Funding is urgently required for enhancing education opportunities for adolescents and youth, noting the close link between insecurity, instability and exploitation (including gender-based violence) and youth disaffection, disempowerment and lack of opportunity.
11. **Advocate all organisations supporting education in Rakhine State (including donors) to ensure that their programmes are conflict sensitive and Do No Harm** based on robust, credible and ongoing assessment and analysis and, wherever possible, contribute to the longer-term aim of reconciliation and peace-building as part of a coherent state-wide strategy.
12. **Advocate for more education agencies and organisations to support the short-term emergency education efforts in Rakhine State**, including those already delivering development programmes in the affected areas, as well as engaging their experience, expertise and resources in the work of identifying and supporting the longer-term durable solution.

This document is only a summary of a larger assessment report which includes more background and detail, including a summary of the general root causes, drivers and triggers of the inter-communal conflict in Rakhine and more information on education in Myanmar and Rakhine.